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Heritage Statement

**Kingsway Hall Hotel,
66 Great Queen St,
London
WC2B 5BX**

Cola Holdings

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KINGSWAY HALL HOTEL, 66 GREAT QUEEN STREET, LONDON, WC2B 5BX

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This Heritage Statement has been prepared by CgMs on behalf of Cola Holdings in order to support an application for the extension of the Kingsway Hall Hotel, which stands at 66 Great Queen Street, in the London Borough of Camden. The proposals seek the introduction of two additional floors of accommodation to the existing hotel, and have been developed following detailed consultation with the London Borough of Camden.

The Kingsway Hall Hotel was built in 1998 in a broadly Postmodern, classically influenced style. The building has a broadly symmetrical appearance, particularly below parapet level. Above the building's main parapet, however, the mansard is cut away from its western flank wall. This appears to be a response to the fact that to the east, the unlisted building on the corner of Great Queen Street and Kingsway is substantially taller, with a tall mansard roof, while to the west, the Connaught Rooms (itself sensitive, given that it is a Grade II* listed building) is shorter, and allows more views of the Hotels' roofscape.

In addition to the Grade II* Connaught Rooms, a designated heritage asset whose setting includes the Kingsway Hall Hotel, the building also sits within one designated heritage asset, the Kingsway Conservation Area, and in the setting of another, the Seven Dials (Covent Garden) Conservation Area. The potential impact on these assets are assessed within this document.

This report has been written to assist decision makers by providing a detailed assessment of the heritage assets within the vicinity of the proposed development, and a detailed appraisal of the impact of the proposals on the historic environment, within the framework of national, strategic and local policies relating to the historic environment. It should be read alongside the other submission documents, including the application drawings and Design and Access Statement. The revised scheme has been developed and amended in light of the council's advice, as well as our detailed assessment of the site, its context and the surrounding heritage assets.



Figure 1: The Kingsway Hall Hotel, an unlisted building in the Kingsway Conservation Area. Constructed in 1998 on the site of the Kingsway Hall Methodist Chapel, it stands on a narrow street just to the west of Kingsway itself, with the Grade II* listed Connaught Rooms (just visible on the right of this image) directly to the west.

2.0 LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

2.1 NATIONAL POLICY AND GUIDANCE

The current policy regime identifies, through the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), that applications should consider the potential impact of development on Heritage Assets. This term includes both designated heritage assets, which possess a statutory designation (for example listed buildings, conservation areas, and registered parks and gardens), as well as undesignated heritage assets.

Legislation

Where any development may affect designated or undesignated heritage assets, there is a legislative framework to ensure the proposals are developed and considered with due regard for their impact on the historic environment. This extends from primary legislation under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. The relevant legislation in this case extends from Section 16 of the 1990 Act which states that in considering applications for listed building consent, the local planning authority shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the Listed Building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

Furthermore, Section 72 of the 1990 Act states that in exercising all planning functions, local planning authorities must have special regard to the desirability of preserving or enhancing Conservation Areas and their setting.

National Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) published March 2012

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published on 27 March 2012 and is the document which sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. It has purposefully been created to provide a framework within which local people and Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) can produce their own distinctive Local and Neighbourhood Plans which reflect the needs and priorities of their communities. The NPPF should therefore be approached as a piece of guidance in drawing up these plans.

When determining Planning Applications the NPPF directs LPAs to apply the presumption in favour of sustainable development; the

'golden thread' which is expected to run through their plan-making and decision-making. It must be noted however that this is expected to apply except where this conflicts with other policies contained within the NPPF, including those relating to the protection of designated heritage assets. (Paragraph 14)

Section 12, 'Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment', Paragraphs 126-141, relate to developments that have an affect upon the historic environment. These policies provide the framework to which local authorities need to refer when setting out a strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment in their Local Plans.

Paragraph 128 states that when determining applications, LPAs should require applicants to describe the significance of the heritage assets affected and the contribution made by their setting. The level of detail provided should be proportionate to the significance of the asset and sufficient to understand the impact of the proposal on this significance.

According to Paragraph 129, LPAs are also obliged to identify and assess the significance of an heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal and should take this assessment into account when considering the impact upon the heritage asset.

Paragraph 131 advises local authorities to take into account a number of points when determining planning applications, including the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and preserving them in a viable use consistent with their conservation; the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that the conservation of the historic environment can bring; the desirability of new development in making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness; and opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place. It states that these considerations should be taken into consideration when determining planning applications.

Paragraphs 132 to 136 consider the impact of a proposed development upon the significance of a heritage asset. Paragraph 132 emphasises the importance of conserving heritage assets and that harm or loss to a heritage asset requires clear and convincing justification.

Paragraph 133 states that where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to or loss of significance of a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent unless it can be demonstrated that this harm or loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits, or unless the nature of the asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site, and no viable use or grant funding is possible.

Paragraph 134 address situations where less than substantial harm to heritage assets will arise as a result of a proposed development, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing the assets' optimum viable use.

Paragraph 137 encourages LPAs to look for new development opportunities within Conservation Areas, and states that developments which better reveal or enhance the significance of a designated heritage asset and its setting, will be looked upon favourably.

The national policy framework has therefore moved away from narrow or prescriptive attitudes towards development within the historic environment, towards intelligent, imaginative and sustainable approaches to managing change. English Heritage has defined this new approach, now reflected in NPPF, as 'constructive conservation': defined as 'a positive and collaborative approach to conservation that focuses on actively managing change...the aim is to recognise and reinforce the historic significance of places, while accommodating the changes necessary to ensure their continued use and enjoyment.' (Constructive Conservation in Practice, English Heritage, 2009).]

Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance (English Heritage, 2008)

Conservation Principles outlines English Heritage's approach to the sustainable management of the historic environment. While primarily intended to ensure consistency in English Heritage's own advice and guidance through the planning process, the document is commended to local authorities to ensure that all decisions about change affecting the historic environment are informed and sustainable.

This document was published in line with the philosophy of PPS5, yet remains relevant with that of the current policy regime in the emphasis placed upon the importance of understanding significance as a means to properly assess the effects of change to heritage assets. The guidance describes a range of heritage values which enable the significance of assets to be established systematically, with the four main 'heritage values' being: evidential, historical, aesthetic and communal. The Principles emphasise that 'considered change offers the potential to enhance and add value to places...it is the means by which each generation aspires to enrich the historic environment' (paragraph 25).

2.2 STRATEGIC AND LOCAL POLICY AND GUIDANCE

Strategic Policy

The London Plan (July 2011)

On 22 July 2011 the Mayor of London published a new version of the London Plan which replaced the amended version of 2004. This is the new strategic Development Plan for London, and Policy 7.8 (Heritage Assets and Archaeology) seeks to record, maintain and protect the city's heritage assets in order to utilise their potential within the community.

Policy 7.8 further provides the relevant policy with regard to development in historic environments. It requires that developments which have an affect upon heritage assets and their settings should conserve their significance, by being sympathetic to their form, scale, materials and architectural detail.

Policy 7.4 (Local Character) requires new developments to have regard to the local architectural character in terms of form, massing, function and orientation. This is supported by Policy 7.8 in its requiring local authorities in their LDF policies, to seek to maintain and enhance the contribution of built, landscaped and buried heritage to London's environmental quality, cultural identity and economy, as part of managing London's ability to accommodate change and regeneration.

Policy 7.9 (Heritage Led Regeneration) advises that regeneration schemes should 'identify and make use of heritage assets and reinforce the qualities that make them significant'. It is recognised that heritage assets should be put to a use suitable for their conservation and role within sustainable communities and that successful schemes can help stimulate environmental, economic and community regeneration.

The London Plan therefore encourages the enhancement of the historic environment and looks favourably upon developments which seek to maintain the setting of heritage assets.

Local Policy

Camden Core Strategy 2010-2025 (2010)

The Core Strategy, adopted in November 2010, is the principal document in the Local Development Framework and provides the vision, objectives and spatial policies to guide development in the Borough up to 2025.

Strategic Policy CS14 (Promoting High Quality Places and Conserving our Heritage) states that the Council will ensure that Camden's places and buildings are attractive, safe and easy to use by requiring development of the highest standard of design that respects local context and character; preserving and enhancing the Borough's heritage assets, including listed buildings; and seeking the highest standard of access in all buildings.

Camden Development Policies (2010)

The Camden Development Policies document, adopted in November 2010, forms part of the Local Development Framework alongside the Core Strategy, and provides more specific planning policies, to be used by the Council when determining individual planning applications.

Development Management Policy DP24 (Securing High Quality Design) states that the Council will require all developments, including alterations and extensions to existing buildings, to be of the highest standard of design and will expect developments to consider, among other issues, the character of the existing building; the quality of materials to be used, and accessibility.

Policy DP25 (Conserving Camden's Heritage) states that, in relation to listed buildings, the Council will: prevent the total and substantial demolition of a listed building unless exceptional circumstances are shown that outweigh the case for the retention; only grant consent for a change of use, alterations or extensions to a listed building where it considers this would not cause harm to the special interest of the building.

Local Guidance

London Borough of Camden have prepared Camden Planning Guidance (CPG) to support the policies in the Local Development Framework (LDF). The guidance is consistent with the Core Strategy and the Development Policies, and forms a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) which is an additional "material consideration" in planning decisions.

Camden Planning Guidance 1: Design (2011)

Adopted in April 2011, this guidance provides information on all types of detailed design issues within the Borough and includes the following sections:

1. Design excellence
2. Heritage
3. Extensions, alterations and conservatories
4. Roofs, terraces and balconies
5. Landscape design and trees
6. Shopfronts
7. Advertisements, signs and hoardings
8. Designing safer environments
9. Waste recyclables storage
10. Building services equipment

In addition to these documents, the London Borough of Camden has produced a number of Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Guidelines documents. Of particular relevance are the **Kingsway Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Guidelines** (adopted December 2001), and the **Covent Garden (Seven Dials) Conservation Area Statement** (adopted in 1998).

3.0 ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORIC APPRAISAL

3.1 KINGSWAY AND HOLBORN: HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT

The history of Great Queen Street is closely connected to the wider development of London from its earliest origins. Development within the vicinity of this street has been traced to the Roman period, when roads and roadside cemeteries radiated out from the centre of Londinium to the east, including one following the approximate line of Holborn and Oxford Street and The Strand to the south. Later, the area bounded by Trafalgar Square, the Strand, Oxford Street/High Holborn and the River Thames to the south became settled as a Saxon trading centre known as Lundenwic, although this was abandoned at the end of the ninth century, with settlement shifting back to the former centre of Londinium.

Whilst settlement was largely concentrated within the walled City and its immediate vicinity for the next few hundred years, the establishment of Covent Garden in the 1630s provided a new stimulus for development in the general area of Great Queen Street, leading to new urbanisation during the seventeenth century, spreading outwards from the Piazza which was designed by Inigo Jones for the Earl of Bedford as a distinguished and fashionable Italianate square.

Soon after the construction of Covent Garden, a larger square was laid out at Lincoln's Inn Fields, to the east of the present Great Queen Street. To the present day this square represents the largest public square in London. The development of housing was slower to follow, however, being interrupted by the English Civil War. With time, there was a general shift to the west in the location of fashionable residences and Lincoln's Inn Fields were left to rich lawyers, taking advantage of its proximity to the Inns of Court, an association that has prevailed to the present day.

Great Queen Street was laid out in the first half of the seventeenth century by the speculator William Newton, developed alongside Lincoln's Inn Fields. Up until the construction of Kingsway in 1905, Great Queen Street formed a continuation of the north side of Lincoln's Inn Fields. The name of the street relates to its origins as a royal private way to one of the James I's residences in Hertfordshire, named after his Queen, Anne of Denmark.



Figure 2: Image of Covent Garden, established in the 1630s, which stimulated development in the vicinity of Great Queen Street, laid out in the second half of the seventeenth century.



Figure 4: Further to the movement of fashionable society to the west, Lincoln's Inn Fields became the home of rich lawyers, who took advantage of its proximity to the Inns of Court.

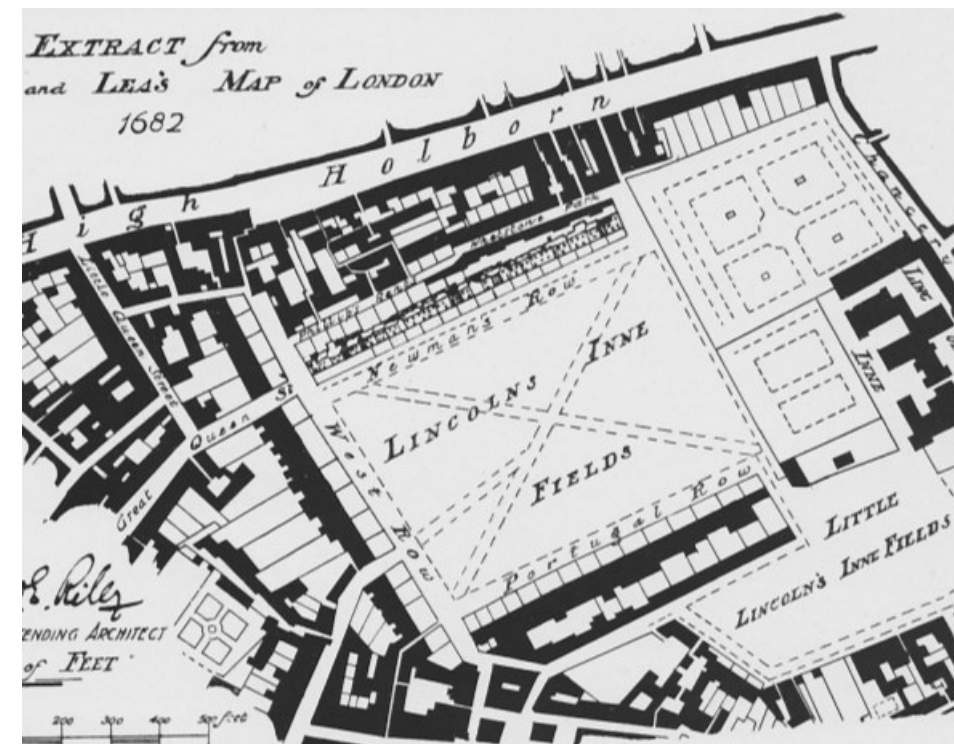


Figure 3: Lincoln's Inn Fields was developed around the same time as Great Queen Street, which once shared a spatial relationship before Kingsway divided them.



Figure 5: Queen Anne of Denmark, for whom Great Queen Street was named.

3.1 KINGSWAY AND HOLBORN: HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT

By the end of the nineteenth century, the area between Lincoln's Inn and Covent Garden consisted of a maze of densely occupied, narrow streets, which had grown up over the centuries between more formerly laid out estates. Historic images suggest a mixture of residential, industrial and retail uses, with shops, restaurants and housing crammed into yards between factory chimneys, a surprising site for Central London. In 1898, the London County Council finally produced plans for the redevelopment of Holborn, including the construction of the Aldwych and Kingsway, prior to a seven year planning and construction period that saw it completed in 1905. The programme was essentially driven by concern to undertake slum clearance; as figure 9 indicates, until this period, the area was made of narrow streets, with tightly packed eighteenth and nineteenth century buildings.

Kingsway and Aldwych were in the grand, Imperial manner, an expression of national confidence, with roads thirty feet wide, lined with stone faced, Baroque banks, embassies and offices. Around 600 properties were cleared, and over 3,000 working class inhabitants rehoused in Millbank, in order to create the new roads.

The road's layout and construction was well organised and constructed, intended to serve a number of different purposes beyond mere road transport. As figure 6 indicates, provision was made for pipework, and for a new tram subway, which served existing tram routes, taking them away from the surface to reduce congestion. The tramway remained operational until 1952, when trams were completely withdrawn by London Transport. The southern part of the tramway subway was reused, from 1964, as the Strand Underpass, a mono-directional, northbound underpass, to draw traffic away from the busy Strand-Kingsway junction. The rest of the tramway remains to the north, and retains its tracks and other original features.

The redevelopment included the opening of new tube stations at the northern and southern ends of Kingsway; Holborn, still extant, to the north, and Strand (later Aldwych) to the south. The former opened in 1906, as Kingsway reached completion, and the latter a year later in 1907, on a branch line from the Piccadilly Line at Holborn. These new transport links, and the improved connections that Kingsway and Aldgate offered between the Strand and High Holborn, ensured that there was little issue in attracting tenants and speculative developers, and even today, Kingsway is mainly lined by buildings constructed in the period between 1905 and 1914.

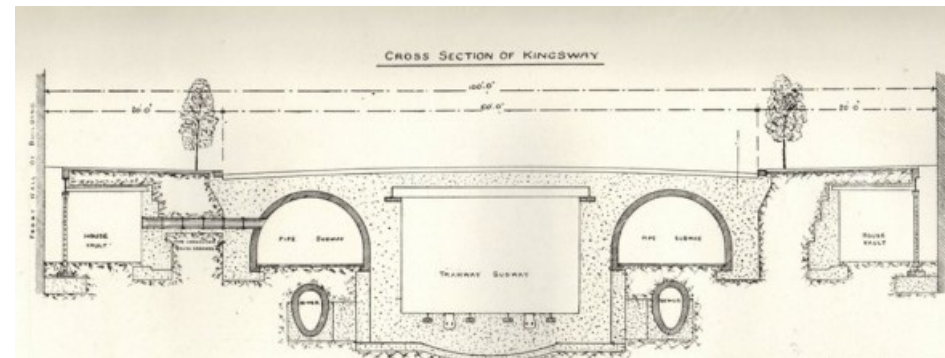


Figure 6: Cross section plan of Kingway, showing the generous width of the new road, and the tramway and pipe subways that were integrated into its design.

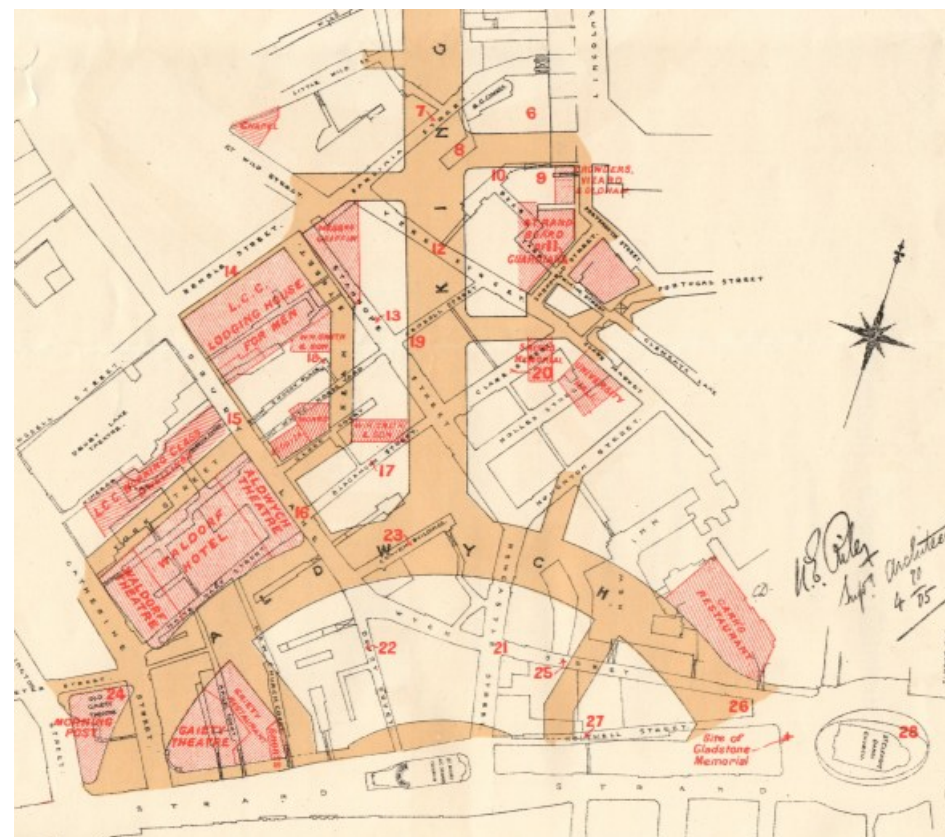


Figure 7: Plan of the Aldwych and Kingsway, dated to 1905. This plan gives a sense of the scale and intrusion of the development, which wiped away a large number of historic streets and buildings.



Figure 8: Kingsway as it appears in 1907, during its extensive redevelopment. The junction with Great Queen Street can be seen on the left hand side, while the heavily propped building in the middle distance on the right is the now-demolished chapel of the Sardinian Embassy.



Figure 9: Early twentieth century image of Wych Street (visible on figure 7, running through the middle of the Aldwych), prior to its demolition. The narrow, densely built nature of the road contrasts sharply with the width, generosity and grandeur of Kingsway and the Aldwych.

3.2 GREAT QUEEN'S STREET AND THE KINGSWAY HALL HOTEL: HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

The site of the Kingsway Hall Hotel was occupied, from the eighteenth century, by a Wesleyan Methodist Chapel. Constructed on the site of 66-68 Great Queen Street, it occupied the same broadly triangular site that the Hotel now sits within. The previous houses on the site had been built around 1640, on a speculative basis, as much of Great Queen Street had been. It is not known when the chapel was first constructed, although around 1706, one Mr Baguley had constructed, and was officiating in, a chapel he had constructed to the rear of 68 Great Queen's Street, and by the 1720s, No. 68 was excluded from rent assessments, suggesting that the house itself had been converted to use as a chapel.

It is clear that the Chapel, still accessed through 66 Great Queen Street, was well established by 1758, following its acquisition by Rev. Thomas Francklyn along with No. 67, and for the next fifty years, the chapel occupied in the rear yard of these houses, subject to difficult access and noise from surrounding houses. As a result of these issues, therefore, agreement was reached between with the owners of No. 66 (in addition to 67 and 68), resulting in the construction of a new chapel, opened in September 1817. While still sitting to the rear of the houses facing onto Great Queen Street, it was given a street presence, through the construction of a new stuccoed façade (figure 10); heavily corniced with an ionic portico, it occupied the site of No. 67, and was therefore of the same width as the houses it neighboured.

The horseshoe shaped chapel to the rear, complete with balcony seating and recessed west end, survived until 1910, when the wider redevelopment of Kingsway led to it being condemned and demolished; its replacement, in 1912, was the Kingsway Hall, a new 2,000 seat Methodist chapel for the West London Mission, with access onto both Kingsway and Great Queen Street. Despite its origins as a place of worship, it quickly became noted for its excellent acoustics, and became well known as a concert and recording venue; the London Symphony Orchestra made over 400 recordings in the hall between 1926 and 1984, with the London Philharmonic making a further 280.

The building was purchased by the Greater London Council in 1983, and remained in their ownership, and under only occasional use, until 1996. By this point, its deterioration was considered to be so substantial that it was not worth saving, and two years later, in 1998, it was demolished by the current operators, to make way for the Kingsway Hall Hotel.

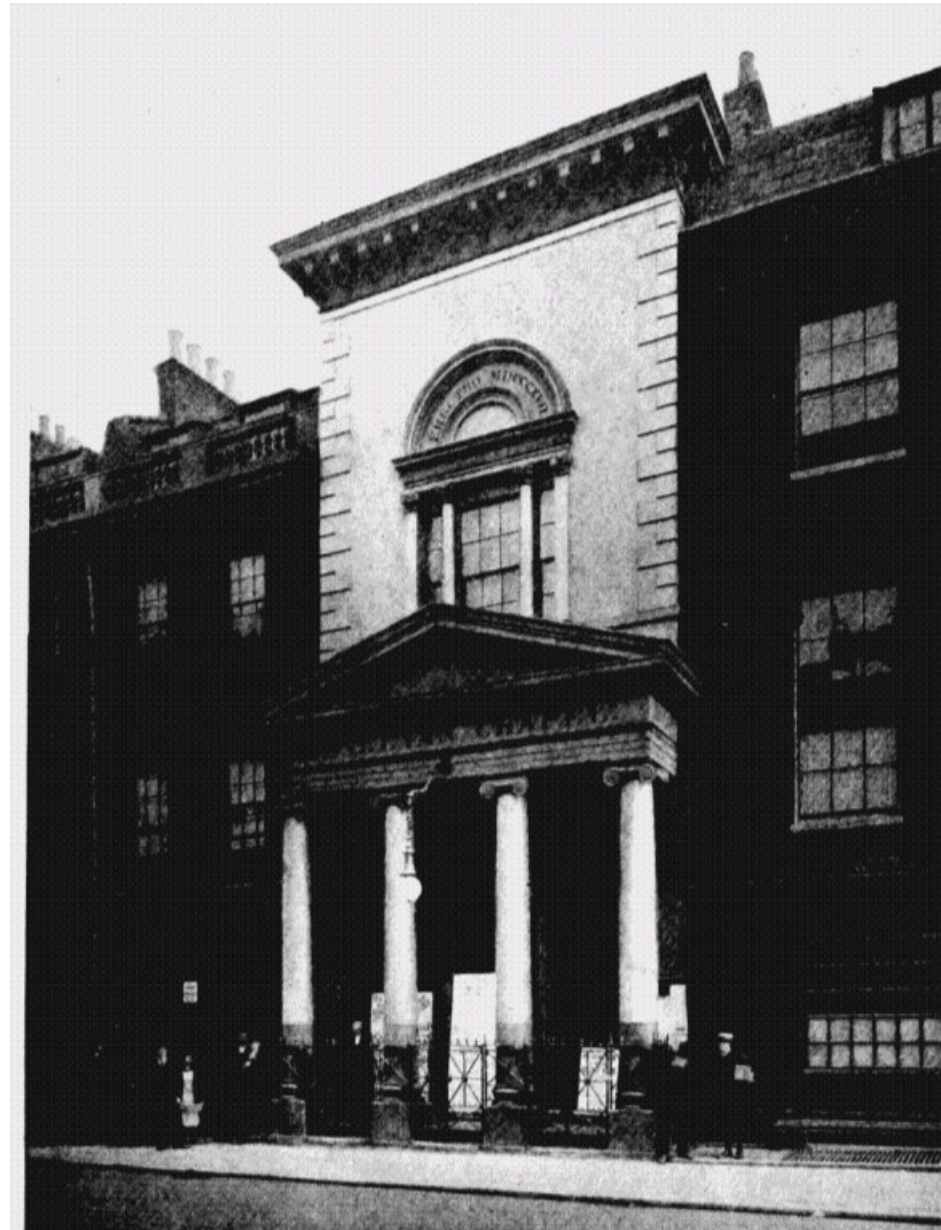


Figure 10: The frontage of the Great Queen Street Chapel, opened in 1817, showing the stuccoed front at 67 Great Queen Street and provided access to the Chapel to the rear.



Figure 11: The Freemason's Tavern at 61 Great Queen Street, giving a flavour of the street's appearance as a Georgian set piece prior to the early twentieth century redevelopment of the area.



Figure 12: The interior of the Kingsway Hall Methodist Chapel, a well used concert and recording venue, in use by a large orchestra.

3.3 HISTORIC MAP PROGRESSION



Figure 13: Holborn as shown on John Rocque's Map of 1746, with the Site broadly indicated. In the absence of Kingsway, the area appears as a dense townscape, although with little evidence of development to the north, towards Bloomsbury. The first Great Queen Street Chapel is marked here.

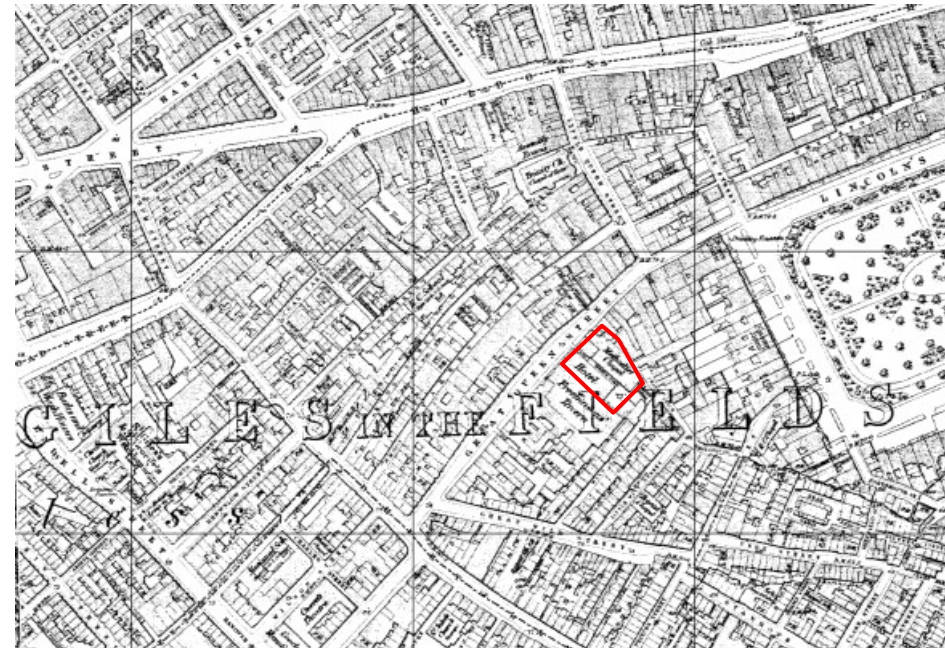


Figure 15: 1875 Ordnance Survey map, with the Kingway Hall Chapel, and the neighbouring Freemason's Tavern and Halls visible.



Figure 17: 1916 Ordnance Survey map, showing conditions following the development of Kingsway and the Aldwych. This map contrasts sharply with figure 16. Note the existence of the large Kingsway Hall Chapel and the Freemason's Tavern to the west.



Figure 14: Horwood's Map of 1799-1819, provides more detail than Rocque's Map, and it is possible to see the area as a rather ad hoc area of seventeenth and eighteenth century development, less rigorous than the great estates to the west and north.



Figure 16: 1896 Ordnance Survey Map. By this point, the broad site of the Kingsway Hall Hotel was beginning to emerge through the development of the Methodist Chapel's land holdings.



Figure 18: The 1965 Ordnance Survey map, again showing the domination of the area by large floorplate buildings, including the Chapel and the Freemason's Hall, built in 1933.

4.0 SITE ASSESSMENT AND ASSESSMENT OF ASSETS

4.1 SITE ASSESSMENT

The site of the Kingsway Hall Hotel consists of an eight storey, Post-modernist hotel building, built in 1998. Steel-framed and faced in stone and reconstituted stone, it is a relatively wide building of eleven bays, with a symmetrical finish. The end bays, and the three middle bays (the central bay of which is curved), are channelled to create a sense of solidity and grounding. Above the six storey main masonry façade and its prominent parapet, there is a set back storey, and a dormered mansard roof.

The plot in which the Hotel sits is broadly triangular, and to the rear, the building is surrounded by more prominent structures, facing onto Kingsway and Wild Court. The Hotel is flanked to the east by 77 Kingsway, an eight storey, refurbished Edwardian office building (visible in figure 19). Although it has a similar number of floors to the Kingsway Hall Hotel, its floor heights are substantially greater, and as can be seen from figure 19, the building's return to Great Queen's Street (and particularly the party wall created by its two levels of dormers and other roof structures) tower over the Kingsway Hall Hotel. It is quite clear from on-site assessments that any increase in the height of the Hotel will not be prominent (or even visible) from the east, as a result of the size and prominence of 77 Kingsway.

To the west, the parapet height of the Connaught Rooms (a Grade II* listed building, subject to a detailed assessment later in this document), is not as high as that at the Kingsway Hall Hotel, whose roovescape is, by extension, more exposed in views from the west.

Overall, therefore, it is clear that the rear part of the building, and the majority of the flanking facades, are concealed within views from the surrounding townscape, and the principal issues here are, therefore, the visibility of any roof extension in terms of Great Queen Street (and limited views from Kingsway and Newton Street). In particular, views over the Grade II* listed Connaught Rooms from the west are particularly sensitive.



Figure 19: View of the Kingsway Hall Hotel from the junction with the Kingsway, from the east. Note the prominent position of 77 Kingsway to the east of the hotel, and the limited views of the roovescape of the Kingsway Hall Hotel from this location.



Figure 21: View from the west, with the Connaught Rooms visible to the right of the hotel. Again, from this location, the building's recessed roovescape is not particularly visible.



Figure 20: View of the façade from Newton Street, beneath the bridge of New Brook Buildings (just visible). This is the furthest north along Newton Street that one is able to see the Hotel. This view therefore indicates how limited visible of the building's roovescape is from directly in front of the building.



Figure 22: View from further west, with the Freemason's Hall visible on the right. The roovescape of the Kingsway Hall Hotel is more visible from this location, but is rather distant, and therefore not particularly prominent, particularly given the relative prominent and scale of other buildings, in the foreground.

4.2 ASSESSMENT OF ASSETS: KINGSWAY CONSERVATION AREA

The Kingsway Conservation Area was designated in 1981, and is subject to a Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Guidelines Document, adopted in December 2001.

The Conservation Area is strictly linear, and is focused on Kingsway and part of Southampton Row, from where the latter meets Vernon Place to the north, to where the former meets Sardinia Street and Kemble Street to the south, on the border of Camden and the City of London.

Clearly, the character and appearance of the Kingsway Conservation Area is dictated by its origins as an early twentieth century redevelopment by the LCC, as detailed in 3.1, above. Focused on Kingsway itself, broad at 30 feet wide, and lined with trees and broad pavements, it provides good long views to the north and south, with occasional, more limited views in and out of the Conservation Area to the east and west. It's built environment is relatively well unified, dominated by early twentieth century steel and concrete framed buildings with sheer stone facades and heavily expressed Beaux Arts detailing. Buildings sit to the front of their plots, and tend to stand at between 6 and 10 storeys, often with mansard roofs of up to three storeys.

It contains a number of different uses, with retail and restaurant uses at ground floor level in most units and office uses on the upper floors of most buildings. The area contains little residential occupation, but there are a number of hotels in and around the Area. The Conservation Area Appraisal identifies that some features, such as poorly designed shop fronts and roof extensions, have had an adverse impact on the area's character.

The Conservation Area and Management Appraisals document identifies a number of specific issues which applications should address. These include a requirement for new extensions to have regard to the character, design, building lines and roof lines of the Area, and to be of an appropriate quality and design for the area. It also identifies that materials will be an important issue for the local authority when determining applications, as will the prominence and significance of any existing roofscapes.

As figure 23 illustrates, the Kingsway Hall Hotel sits on the edge of the Conservation Area, on its short return to Great Queen Street. As such, views of the hotel from within the Area are restricted to the street immediately in front of the hotel, and some limited views from Kingsway, such as that shown in figure 19.



Figure 23: Map of the Kingsway Conservation Area, with the development site marked in red.



Figure 24: View south along Kingsway from the junction of the road with Great Queen Street. Note the broad, elegant feel and scale of the Conservation Area.



Figure 25: View north from a similar point of view, towards Holborn Station. Again, large stone buildings of a broadly Beaux Arts design sit tall beside the broad, tree-lined width of Kingsway itself.

4.3 ASSESSMENT OF ASSETS: SEVEN DIALS CONSERVATION AREA

The Seven Dials Conservation Area was first designated in 1971 and later extended on various occasions in 1974, 1991 and 1998.

The general character of the conservation area is derived from the range and mix of building types, uses and street layout. As is often expected in urban conservation areas, the character is not dominated by one particular period or style of building, but their mix is indicative of the area's development alongside changing tastes and fashions. It is this variety in which the special interest of the Seven Dials area lies. In the densely occupied streetscape of the conservation area, changes in road width, building form and land-use give dramatic character variation, with narrow alleys and formal open spaces, such as Seven Dials, adding to the variety.

The conservation area has been subdivided into three character areas, each of which are analysed in detail in the Seven Dials Conservation Area Appraisal: Sub-area 1 includes the area around Seven Dials and stretches north east to include Endell Street and part of Drury Lane, Sub-area 2 includes buildings lying either side of Great Queen Street and Sub-area 3 includes the length of Macklin Street and parts of Drury Lane and Newton Street at either end.

The character of Great Queen Street as a sub area is defined to a large extent by the distinct areas either side of it. To the east is Kingsway, an Edwardian development with generally higher buildings, some with multi-dormered storeys and to the west is Covent Garden, with its generally lower and smaller scale buildings. The architectural character is generally very high along Great Queen Street, with a number of buildings listed for their special architectural or historic interest. The survival of two groups of eighteenth century houses adds considerably to the character of the streetscape, sharing characteristics of red brick, heavy wooden eaves, cornices and pilaster orders rising from the first floor level to the cornice.

Great Queen Street has some considerable importance in the development of street design, illustrating the movement away from 'gabled individualism' of properties and a movement towards regular street lines, a trend that prevailed for over two hundred years. Although now demolished, a row of houses built by William Newton in Great Queen Street in the later 1630s were built with a unified appearance by the use of giant Corinthian pilasters and have been described as the first regular street in London.

Today the street demonstrates a wide range of building sizes and styles from varying periods. Particularly prominent is The Freemasons Hall,

constructed with a steel frame faced with Portland Stone. It fills an irregularly shaped building plot at the junction of two roads and is distinguished from the surrounding streetscape by its scale and bulk.

Great Queen Street also has some interest for the generous width of the western end of the street set out in the seventeenth century. It also retains important views along Great Queen Street from Kingsway and also from Drury Lane.

Negative features of this part of the Conservation Area include a part twelve-storey, part six-storey 1960s office development at the junction with Newton Street, which represents an inappropriate addition to the streetscape and which does not respect its special architectural and historic character. Also making a negative contribution to the conservation area is another office block at 43-49 Parker Street, with a blue tinted glass façade which is inappropriate in terms of its building materials that are otherwise a foreign addition to the streetscape.

The Kingsway Hall Hotel sits just to the east of the Conservation Area, outside its boundary, but within its setting.

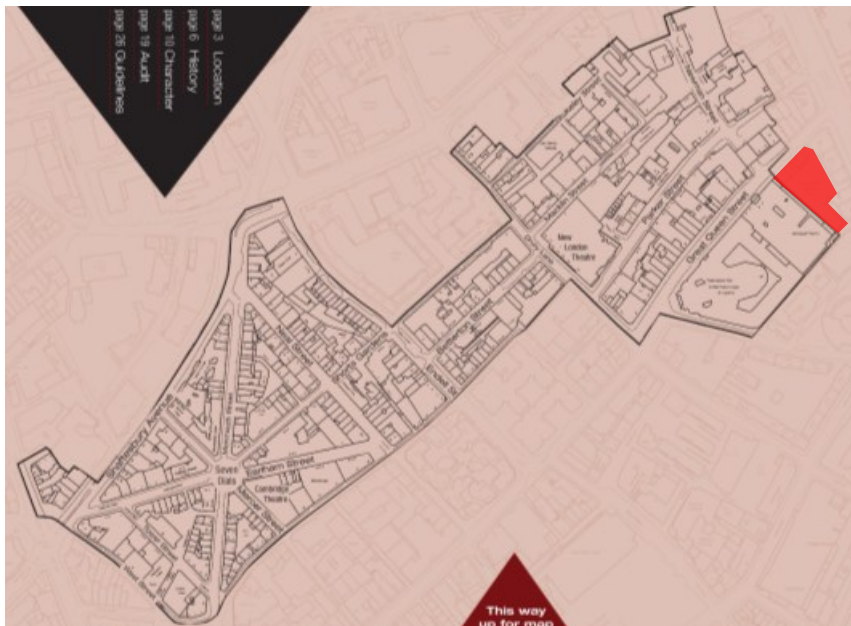


Figure 26: Map of the Seven Dials Conservation Area, with the site, just outside the area, marked in red.



Figure 27: A view of the properties located opposite the property at 33 Great Queen Street. These indicate the nature of the streetscape which is made up of a variety of properties from the eighteenth to the twentieth centuries and which define the character of the Conservation Area in this way.



Figure 28: The area around Great Queen Street demonstrates a range of building styles and building materials, with later buildings generally retaining far larger building plots than the surviving eighteenth century buildings.

4.3 ASSESSMENT OF ASSETS: LISTED BUILDINGS

Connaught Rooms (Grade II*)

The Grand Connaught Rooms, listed at Grade II* in 2010, was a building that was first constructed in 1774 as the Freemason's Tavern (a name associated with the Headquarters Building of the Freemasons to the west). Although originally constructed at this point, internally and externally, the building is very much a highly elaborated building of nineteenth and early twentieth century date, with the site having been redeveloped in 1863-64 by Frederick Pepys Cockerell, and between 1905 and 1910 by Brown and Barrow.

The Freemason's Tavern (centred on 61 Great Queen Street) was purchased by the Grand Lodge of England in 1774 and built a new hall to the rear of the site, behind the existing tavern, at the front of the plot facing Great Queen Street, and built in 1637. The lodge then acquired the lease for the tavern itself, and rebuilt it in 1788-9. The site grew over the course of the nineteenth century to include numbers 59, 60, 62 and 63 Great Queen Street, and was subsequently redeveloped by Sir John Soane from around 1815, with the construction of a second hall. Cockerell was then taken on to completely redevelop the site, retaining part of the original 1774 hall to the rear of the site, and redeveloping the Freemason's Tavern to the front of the site, and the other late eighteenth century building. Cockerell, like Soane a Freemason, and the son of CR Cockerell (architect of the Ashmolean Museum, in Oxford, and St George's Hall, Liverpool), was himself responsible for a number of large country houses, such as Down Hall, Essex.

The nineteenth century Freemason's Tavern and its associated rooms to the rear were a popular catering and events venue, and following the acquisition by the United Grand Lodge of further land to the rear, the site was redeveloped as the Grand Connaught Rooms, in honour of the then Grand Master, the Duke of Connaught. Cockerell's elaborate Grand Hall (figure xx) was extended, and a new entrance hall and a new grand stair built.

The site was substantially remodelled again in the 1930s with the construction of the prominent Headquarters Building on the corner of Great Queen Street and Wild Street, which led to the demolition of most of Cockerell's 1860s façade, apart from five remaining bays.

The Grand Connaught Rooms are therefore significant as an important site in the history of British Freemasonry, and as a substantial, elaborate example of changing patterns in the provision



Figure 29: View of the Connaught Rooms from Great Queen Street, showing its dual façade, with one half from the Freemason's Tavern, and the other the remaining part of a FP Cockerell's Freemason's Hall.

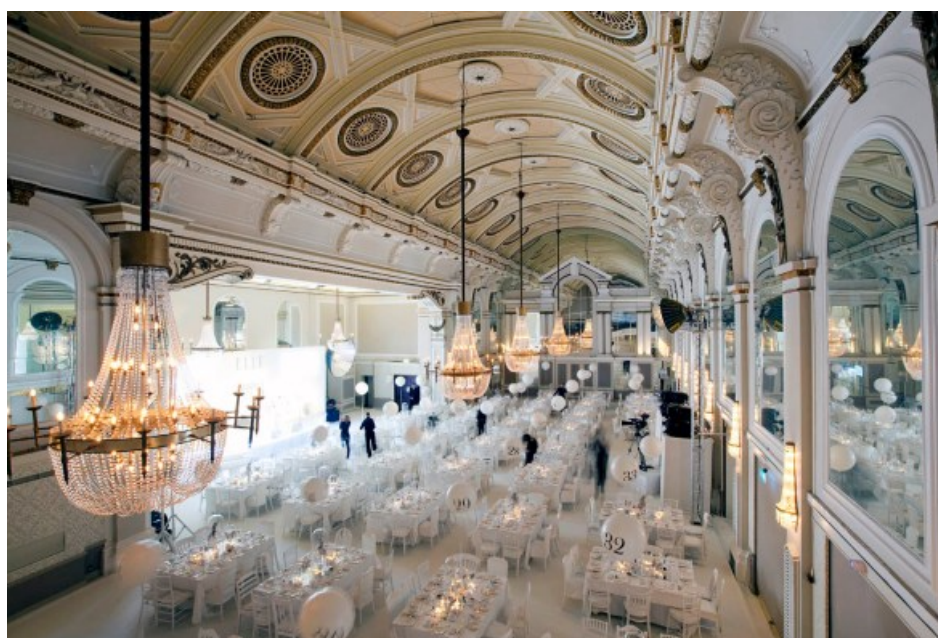


Figure 30: Interior view, showing the extended nineteenth century Grand Hall.

of catering and events facilities between the eighteenth and twentieth centuries. The site saw the involvement of a number of prominent architects, and its constant development has led to the creation of a set of internal spaces described within the list description as being 'unique' and consisting of eighteenth century rooms retained from the Freemason's Tavern, alongside elaborate interiors designed in the 1860s, 1900s and 1930s.

In terms of its wider setting, the Grand Connaught Rooms clearly has a close connection to the Freemasons' Hall of 1933 to the west, to which the Connaught Rooms is closely historically and functionally connected. It should be noted that within the building's list description, its group value with Freemason's Hall is explicitly noted. The Rooms' façade is split into two sections (the former frontage of the Freemasons' Tavern, and the remains of Cockerell's Italianate façade for the original Freemason's Hall, and therefore in itself forms part of the varying townscape of Great Queen Street. It should also be noted that the section of the building that constitutes the former façade of the Freemason's Tavern (directly adjacent to the Kingsway Hall Hotel) does have some quite prominent plant on its roof (installed prior to its listing in 2010) and therefore is, to a great extent, not exempt from the heavily developed, commercial feel of the wider area.

5.0 PROPOSALS AND ASSESSMENT OF IMPACT

5.1 PROPOSALS

The current proposals have been developed following pre-application discussions with the London Borough of Camden, including a site meeting on 8 August 2013. Following the receipt of detailed written advice, an alternative scheme has been pursued, which seeks to respond to concerns raised, particularly with regard to the visual impact on the historic environment; this was further discussed in detail with officers on 12 February 2014, leading to the finalisation of the application scheme.

The proposed Description of Development is as follows:

Erection of two storey extension at roof level to provide additional hotel rooms (10x bedrooms on the proposed 8th floor and 10x bedrooms on the proposed 9th floor) in association with the existing Kingsway Hall Hotel (Class C1)

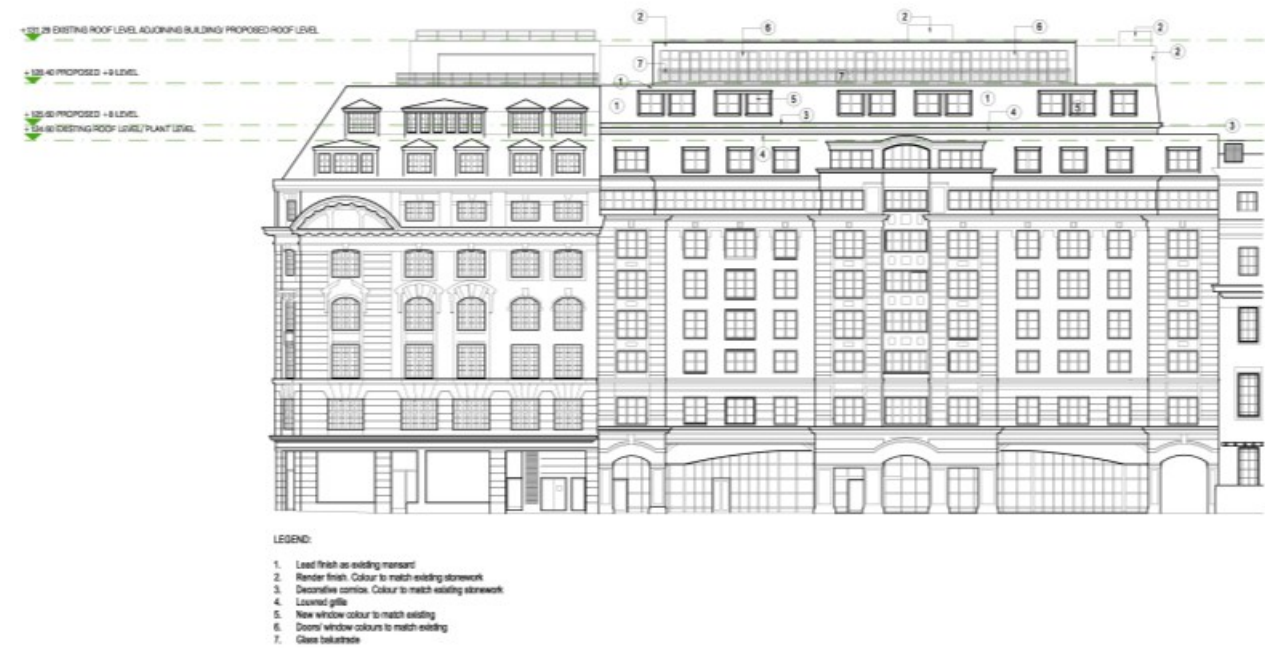


Figure 31: View of the proposed elevation of the Kingsway Hall Hotel, with the proposed ninth and tenth storey extensions shown.



Figure 32: View of the proposed eighth floor of the hotel, providing ten hotel rooms.

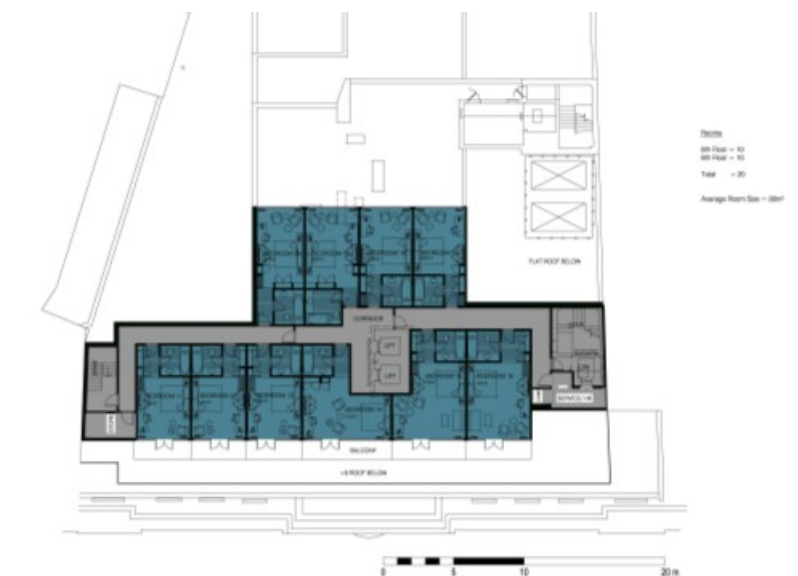


Figure 33: View of the proposed ninth floor. A comparison with figure 32 shows that in order to respect the setting of Connaught Rooms, this floor has been pulled back from the western flank of the building.

5.2 ASSESSMENT OF IMPACT

As identified above, the Kingsway Hall Hotel is a late 1990s hotel building, standing on a section of Great Queen Street which narrows substantially as it approaches Kingsway itself. Views towards the building are predominantly oblique, from a short stretch of Kingsway, or looking east along Great Queen Street. More direct views towards the building are possible from the southern reaches of Newton Street, but these too are limited by the bridge that connects the two sections of New Brook Buildings, the large, newly refurbished (up to 11 storey) 1960s and 1970s building on the northern side of Great Queen Street.

It is clear, furthermore, that the principal heritage issues here are the potential impacts on the character and appearance of the Kingsway Conservation Area, and the setting of the Grade II* listed Connaught Rooms and the Seven Dials (Covent Garden) Conservation Area.

First and foremost, it should be noted that the current proposals have been designed to address concerns raised by London Borough of Camden officers, and have a reduced physical presence compared to the previously submitted scheme. At pre-application stage, the proposed ninth storey was identified as being acceptable in principle; while the tenth storey was described as being unacceptable in principle, this view was based on a set of specific issues, which the current scheme now addresses. It is now strongly felt that the two proposed additional floors preserves the character and appearance, significance and setting of heritage assets in the immediate vicinity.

In terms of the tenth storey, officers from the London Borough of Camden noted at pre-application stage that the proposed design, which at that stage was intended to be symmetrical, was not entirely acceptable, and that a non-symmetrical composition, with greater bulk at the east than at the western end, would allow the building to abut more 'authentically' against its neighbours. Given the additional bulk that 77 Kingsway, to the east, possesses this is considered to be a sensible approach, and as such, the revised proposals for the ninth floor sit back from the building's western flank, while still confidently abutting 77 Kingsway, to the east. It should also be noted that given the council's request that this floor 'step down' to the southwest, next to the Grand Connaught Rooms, a design feature of this type has been integrated with a considerable in massing at the western end, thus ensuring that an appropriate, well scaled relationship is retained with this Grade II*



Figure 34: View of the scheme previously proposed at pre-application. The stone element at roof level, visible above the mansard, has now been removed from the revised scheme (see also figure 35). Note also the rooftop plant to the Connaught Rooms.



Figure 35: Visualisation showing the revised proposals, for comparison with figure 34. Note the greatly reduced visibility and prominence of the building's tenth storey.

listed building. Overall, this will ensure that the proposed tenth storey, while visible within the surrounding townscape, will be an entirely appropriate addition, resulting in a sympathetic and proportionate addition at this level.

While the London Borough of Camden noted an 'in principle' objection to the proposals to add a tenth storey to the Kingsway Hall Hotel, this was identified as being the case because it was considered to be visible in long views from the south west along Great Queen Street, and to therefore create an unacceptable impact on the Seven Dials and Kingsway Conservation Areas, and the setting of the Grand Connaught Rooms. Revisions made to the current scheme ensure that these issues are now fully overcome, and that a tenth storey can be introduced without generating an unacceptable impact on the historic environment.

Following the receipt of Council comments, a detailed assessment of views from the south west was undertaken, taking into account the contribution that the roofline of the Kingsway Hall Hotel makes to the two Conservation Areas and their settings. The tenth storey of the pre-application scheme (see figure 34), was clearly visible in views from the south west. It was thus identified that certain elements of the tenth floor required alteration or removal in order to ensure that it would be invisible in these views from the southwest. This design work has now been undertaken, removing a particularly prominent piece of bulk on the Hotel's western flank; the entire tenth storey will be concealed in these views by the proposed ninth storey mansard, and the foreshortening effect that will arise from the obliqueness of views in this direction. Great Queen Street is surprisingly narrow for a thoroughfare of this status, and is lined by substantial buildings, with prominent and attractive rooflines (the Freemasons' Headquarters Building, amongst others). The Kingsway Hall Hotel will, following this development have a flattened roofline, entirely appropriate in terms of its scale and detailing, with the eye drawn most notably by the mansard roof, and stone detailing below. Within these views, the proposed tenth floor will be entirely invisible, being concealed by these features.

The current approach thus addresses the principle heritage issue in this case, the potential impact on views from the south west, looking out of the Seven Dials Conservation Area and Kingsway Conservation Area (as well as towards the listed Grand Connaught Rooms).

6.0 CONCLUSIONS

This Heritage Statement has been produced to assess the impact of a scheme of proposed works at the Kingsway Hall Hotel, Great Queen Street, on the historic environment. It illustrates that the current scheme, having evolved from discussions with the London Borough of Camden, presents the opportunity to provide additional hotel rooms, without causing an unacceptable impact on the historic environment.

The Kingsway Hall Hotel, while not itself of any great age or architectural merit, nonetheless reflects the general pattern of development within the area, in terms of its design, form and massing, and therefore makes a neutral contribution to the Kingsway Conservation Area, and the setting of the neighbouring, Grade II* listed Connaught Rooms, and the Seven Dials Conservation Area. The proposed works, which seek to add an additional two storeys of hotel accommodation to the Kingsway Hall Hotel, have been designed with the building's relatively sensitive historic context in mind.

It has been demonstrated that the hotel sits within an immediate context that restricts views of much of the hotel's external envelope. It has been demonstrated that the rear of the hotel is concealed from the surrounding townscape as a result of the density of development in the immediate vicinity. It has been further illustrated that the prominence and scale of 77 Kingsway prevents clear views of the hotel from the east, while the bridge between the two sections of New Brook Buildings, to the north, limits the availability of direct views of the building's façade and roofscape. Indeed, it is concluded that beyond limited, oblique views to the east and west, the building's entire façade can rarely be fully appreciated, and in most views, its roofscape is concealed from view. The building's roof line, as a result, does not make a particularly notable contribution to the character, appearance or significance of the Kingsway Conservation Area, or the setting of the Connaught Rooms or Seven Dials Conservation Area.

During pre-application discussions, concerns were particularly raised with regard to views along Great Queen Street from the south west; it is certainly clear that given the limited views from Newton Street, Kingsway, and the immediate vicinity of the Hotel, these views represent the most heritage sensitive element of the scheme. With this in mind, a careful and considered approach has been presented with regards to the proposed ninth and tenth storeys, ensuring that their design, bulk and massing is as discreet

as possible within long and short views, and that the proposals do not create an obtrusive, overbearing or disproportionate impact on the façade of the Kingsway Hall Hotel. It has thus been identified that while the proposed ninth floor will be visible, the tenth floor will be entirely concealed in both long and short views, and given the acceptability of the proposed ninth floor in design and massing terms, it is considered that both of these elements can be introduced while preserving the character, appearance and setting of heritage assets in the immediate vicinity of the site.

For these reasons, it has been possible to conclude that the addition of a discreet pair of additional floors to the Kingsway Hall Hotel will not have a harmful impact on the historic environment. It has been demonstrated that following pre-application discussions, alterations have been made to the scheme to ensure that these additional storeys will not be visible from Great Queen Street, Newton Street or Kingsway, and will overcome all previous concerns.

As such, it is felt that the proposed works will provide the opportunity to enhance the Kingsway Hall Hotel's contribution in terms of hotel rooms, without causing a harmful impact on the character and appearance, significance or setting of nearby heritage assets. As such, the proposals comply with the relevant national, strategic and local policy on conservation, and will preserve the special interest of the designated heritage assets in the immediate vicinity of the site.

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