

# Charlotte Street Association

39 Tottenham Street  
London W1T 4RX

Development Control,  
Planning Services,  
London Borough of Camden,  
Camden Town Hall, Argyle Street,  
London WC1H 8ND.

For the attention of David Peres Da Costa, Planning Officer.

**By email to:** [planning@camden.gov.uk](mailto:planning@camden.gov.uk)

15<sup>th</sup> September 2014

Dear David Peres Da Costa,

**Re: refs. 2014/4483/P and 2013/4690/L: 28 Tottenham Street, London W1T 4RH:**

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Conversion to 2 self-contained flats, including replacement of front lightwell grille, new doors & windows at basement level, and demolition of external rear WC block.

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We commented on, and objected to, the previous proposals in 2013 for 28 Tottenham Street, (please see Charlotte Street Association's two letters dated 26<sup>th</sup> December 2013 and 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2014).

Note concerning the drawings:

Some of the drawings are very feint to read. This particularly applies to the Proposed Plan drawings, especially when printed out, because doors & door-swings, some stairs (and associated partitions; e.g. at 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Plans) appear to be missing.

Compared with the previous application, we are pleased to see that the current proposals recognise that this is a Listed Building Grade 2. We welcome the proposals to retain and repair the existing fabric and features, and especially the existing internal features throughout the building.

Nonetheless, we wish to comment and object as set out below.

**Summary of objections and comments:**

- (1). There is objection to the proposed residential mix; it should be retained as a single family house; (i.e. single family house consisting of 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> floors).  
We strongly query the applicant's statement that the existing residential consists of three residential studios and/or bedsits, (and set out evidence below).
- (2). We object to the car parking use of the rear courtyard. We object to the (previous) demolition of the original enclosing wall to this courtyard, which appears to have been carried out without Listed Building Consent. The wall should be re-instated, and the courtyard should be outside space used by, (and linked to), the residential.

Continued to page 2

- (3). We are greatly concerned at the proposed change of use of the Basement to Retail use, and its linking to the existing Ground Floor retail unit. The enlarged retail unit will inevitably lead to rent increase, which the current (or future) small service-type retail may not be able to afford, and thus the loss of such service-type retail (so essential to local residents and local workers).
- (4). As we say above, we welcome the proposals to retain and repair the existing fabric and features, and especially the existing internal features, of this Grade 2 Listed Building. But, we would ask that certain detailed drawings are requested, to back-up these intentions, and to ensure the existing character of the detailed design is retained.

**Detailed reasons for our objections and comments:**

Below, we set out in more detail our objections and comments:

(a). Objection to the proposed residential mix:

There is objection to the proposed residential mix, which should be retained as a single family house; (i.e. single family house consisting of 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> floors). In the Application and on the existing drawings, the applicant has variously described the existing uses as 3 studio flats or 3 bedsits.

We do not agree that this is the current planning use. As in our objection letters (especially our letter dated 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2014) to the previous proposal, we repeat and set out below our reasons:

(b). Existing single family house residential:

We strongly query the applicant's statement that the existing residential consists of residential studios (or bedsits) at 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor respectively. To our knowledge, these upper floors (above the existing Ground Floor Retail use) have been a single-family house unit for more than 50 years.

The previous long-term tenant (Fiona Green, who also played an active part in the local community until she had to move away in 2012) has confirmed to us that she lived there for fifty years from 1962 until June 2012, with her family bringing up her children there. The 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Floors (together with the Basement) were rented as a single family house. This included the rear external yard and outside toilet, with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor bathroom being subsequently installed. She also told us that this single family unit had been let, to her knowledge, as a single family unit since at least 1960. The single-family house unit was, and still is, self-contained with its own street door & entrance corridor at Ground Floor, together with the staircase serving all floors.

Fiona Green also told us that initially they had to use the outside toilet in the rear yard (which was still not unusual in Fitzrovia in the 1960s/70s also for other residential properties), because there was no internal toilet/bathroom at that time in the house. She told us that the separate retail unit on the Ground Floor did not have access to this external WC, but she later allowed them use of it.

This existing residential is vacant only since the long-term tenant had to leave in 2012 due to a high rent increase.

(c). Rear courtyard:

It is not clear what the proposed use of the courtyard will be, but we object to its use as a car park space. We would query its existing authorised use for car parking.

*Continued to page 3*

(c). Rear courtyard - *continued*:

In our letters concerning the previous application, we referred to the original high brick wall enclosing the rear yard, as shown in the 1974 photograph in the Application.

This 1974 photograph is also shown in the current Heritage Statement by Heritage Collective (their Appendix 2.4). Just to clarify, their accompanying text says "... the wall .... is still standing ..."; presumably they mean still standing at that time in 1974, because today the wall no longer exists.

Our concern is that this wall has since been demolished, apparently without Listed Building Consent. Fiona Green (the previous long-term tenant of 50 years referred to earlier in our letter) has told us that this wall was demolished (by others, presumably the landlord/owner) in the 1980s.

Thus, we think that this enclosing wall should be reinstated (as shown in the photograph), and the use of the rear courtyard should outside space, for use by the proposed residential - there is a great lack of open space in Fitzrovia.

(d). Basement use:

Although we do not necessarily object to the change of use of the Basement to Retail, and its linking to the existing Ground Floor use, we would be greatly concerned if this led to the loss of the type of existing retail use, which is a nail bar.

Our concern is that the increased retail space will inevitably lead to increase rent that the current (or future) small service-type retail will not be able to afford. We would be even more concerned (and strongly object to) if the enlarged retail unit would lead to the premises becoming a restaurant, or similar, not only due to the loss of retail but also due to the detrimental impact on the amenity of the residential above, as well as for this quiet street.

In Tottenham Street, the retail outlets are still generally small service retail, of great use to local residents and those working in the area, (e.g. shoe repair; dry cleaning and tailoring repairs; nail bar, etc). Too many retail premises in neighbouring streets have become sandwich bars and quasi-restaurants.

(e). Existing architectural/building elements/fabric/features, incl. existing internal features:

We welcome the proposals to retain and repair the existing fabric and features, and especially to retaining the existing internal features throughout the building:

- the design of the door architraves (facing onto the staircase) are unusual.
- we also welcome the retention of other features that are so often stripped out, including the shelves and cupboards in the recesses either side of chimney breasts; the original gas light fittings.
- reference is made to retaining the fireplaces; we assume that this also includes retaining and repairing the actual fireplace surrounds and mantle pieces.
- although the gas light fittings are to be protected during the works, we would also ask that particular precautions are taken to ensure that they are not stolen or lost during the building works; (and similarly for the fireplace surrounds re. theft).

Nonetheless, we think that it is important that certain detailed drawings are requested to show how these good intentions will be carried out, including details of the structural interventions to level up the existing floor structures.

We also comment as follows:

(1). Proposed new partition on staircase at 1<sup>st</sup> Floor:

We object to the inevitable "dividing" partition on the Staircase, and the consequent  
*Continued to page 4*

(1). Proposed new partition on staircase at 1<sup>st</sup> Floor - *continued*:

partial obscuring the rear window, as the division between the 2 proposed flats. Although we strongly object to the proposed change into the two flats, there should be detailed drawings to show the design relationship between the new partition and the existing stair handrail/banister, as well as with the rear window. All too often, this difficult detail is completely unsatisfactory and not well thought out, even in Listed Buildings.

Alternatively, the location of this partition could be reconsidered, especially to avoid the rear window, (e.g. maybe locate partition along the 1<sup>st</sup> Floor landing, & parallel to handrail, with the entrance door opposite the window).

(2). Existing timber panelled partition at Ground Floor:

This timber panelled partition between the entrance corridor (access to the residential above) and the existing retail shop is characteristic of a good number of other modest Georgian terraced buildings in the immediate streets here in Fitzrovia.

Sometimes there is the temptation to strip out these partitions because Building Regulations are likely to require this partition to be brought up to half-hour fire standard. There are solutions to bringing it upto standard without losing this original characteristic timber partition, (e.g. terraced houses in Goodge Street). In the circumstances, a detail should be requested to ensure this partition is retained.

(3). Insulation of external walls:

Reference (in Section 2.3 of Design & Access Statement) is made to insulating the external walls (presumably the inside face of the wall) - there should be detailed drawings to show how this will achieved in relationship to the existing window openings/window cills, as well as in relation to such existing features as ceiling cornices, skirtings, etc.

For example, the thickness of any such insulation is likely to compromise existing ceiling cornices.

(4). Double-glazing to the existing windows:

Reference (in Section 2.3 of Desgn & Access Statement) is also made to proposed "slim" double glazed units:

- will the existing timber windows be used ?
- again, there should be detailed drawings showing the proposed timber sections especially for the glazing bars, which all too often are too thick (and too much like the thicker Victorian glazing bars, instead of the slimmer Georgian glazing bars).

Yours sincerely,

Clive Henderson,  
Committee Member,  
On behalf of Charlotte Street Association.

Copy: CSA Committee.  
Ward Councillors.