

FOXTONS

**128 – 130 WEST END LANE, WEST
HAMPSTEAD, NW6 1SX**

PLANNING STATEMENT

NOVEMBER 2014

CONTENTS

| <u>Section</u> | | <u>Page No.</u> |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| 1.0 | Introduction | 1 |
| 2.0 | Site and Surroundings | 2 |
| 3.0 | The Proposed Development | 5 |
| 4.0 | Assessment Against Policy | 7 |
| 5.0 | Concluding Remarks | 11 |

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Statement has been prepared by Montagu Evans LLP to accompany an application for planning permission and advertisement consent at 128-130 West End Lane, West Hampstead, NW6 1SX. These applications are submitted on behalf of Foxtons.
- 1.2 This Statement provides an analysis of the proposed scheme in light of current planning policy.
- 1.3 A change of use is not sought because planning permission (2014/4901/P) was granted on 22 October 2014 for the change of use of the basement and ground floor from Use Class A1 to Use Class A2.
- 1.4 The application for planning permission hereby submitted is for:
“installation of a new shopfront.”
- 1.5 The application for advertisement consent is for:
“one fascia sign and one internally-illuminated projecting sign.”
- 1.6 Advertisement consent is not required for the fascia signage as it benefits from a deemed consent under Class 5 of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 (as amended). Nevertheless, it is indicated in this application for completeness.

2.0 SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

The Application Site

- 2.1 The application site (the “Site”) is located on the eastern side of West End Lane and to the north of Blackburn Road. The general location is shown on **Figure 2.1** below.

Figure 2.1 – General Location of Application Site



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- 2.2 The premises were last used by the Post Office who vacated on 17 July 2014 and relocated to the nearby St. James' Church. The unit is currently vacant.
- 2.3 It is part of a four storey building (including ground) which forms part of a five-bay staggered Victorian terrace. The unit has a double frontage and extends over two bays. The building consists of red brick with stone detailing around the windows.
- 2.4 At ground floor the existing shopfront is framed by powder-coated aluminium. The glazing is separated by a series of mullions and a transom runs across the entrance doorway on the northern bay. A security-shutter box is located above the glazing and a stallriser sits at the base.
- 2.5 A stone fascia sits above the framed shopfront and extends over a doorway which provides access to the upper floors of the host building.
- 2.6 Prior to the Post Office vacating the unit, two non-illuminated projecting signs were located either side of the shopfront at fascia level and a fascia board displaying the name of the business was attached to the stone fascia.

- 2.7 An alarm system is located at the centre of the shopfront between the bays and a cash machine is positioned within the glazing of the southern bay of the shopfront.
- 2.8 A photograph of the shopfront and its host building is shown on **Photograph 2.1**.

Photograph 2.1 – Photograph of Application Site



The Surrounding Area

- 2.9 The surrounding area is dominated by mid-to-late Victorian buildings with retail uses on ground floor and commercial and / or residential uses above. There are a number of single storey buildings to the north and south of the Site which are located on the bridges above the West Hampstead Overground and West Hampstead Underground lines.
- 2.10 Planning permission (2011/3219/P) was granted for the redevelopment of the site opposite (187-199 West End Lane) on 30 March 2012 for seven new buildings comprising 198 residential units as well as commercial floorspace around a public square fronting West End Lane. Various minor material amendments have since been made to this scheme, which will have a modern and contemporary appearance.

- 2.11 In terms of shopfronts, there is no prevalent style in this part of West End Lane. The shopfronts which comprise the terrace in which the unit is located alone vary in materials, proportions and extent of signage.
- 2.12 The Site is not in a conservation area and is not located within close proximity to any statutorily or locally listed buildings.

Planning History of the Site

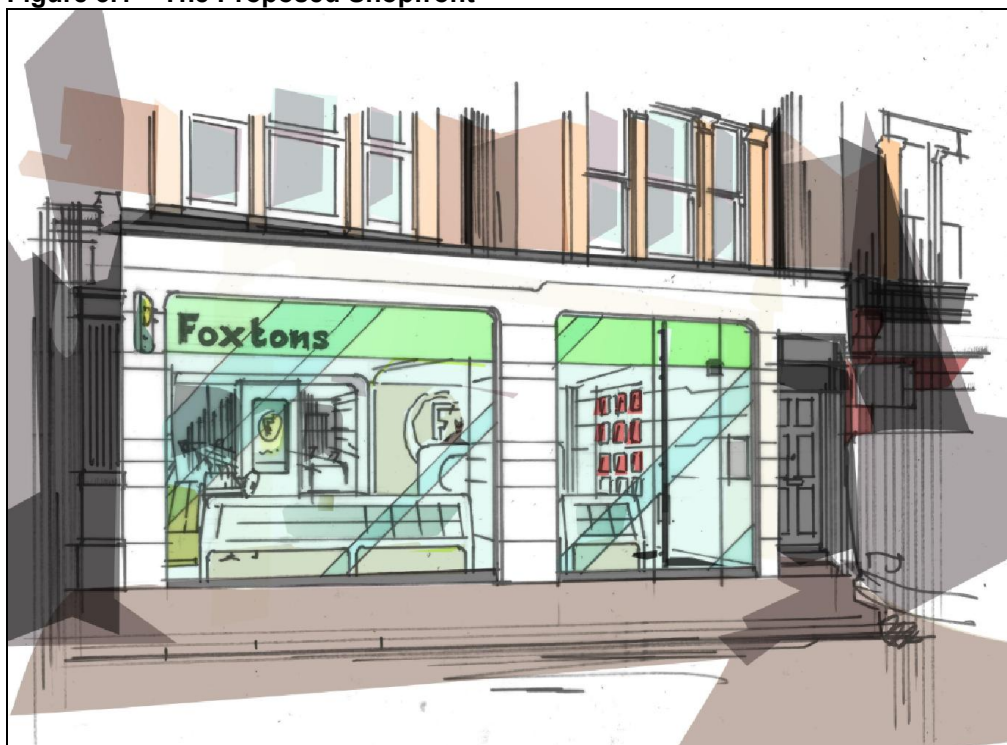
- 2.13 Apart from the change of use of the ground floor and basement from Use Class A1 to Use Class A2 approved on 22 October 2014 (2014/4901/P), an online planning history search of the Site using the Council's website shows no other relevant planning history records.

3.0 THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The Proposed Shopfront

- 3.1 The proposed shopfront would involve the removal of the existing shopfront and associated signage.
- 3.2 The shopfront would be predominantly glazed, using toughened glass. Consistent with other Foxtons branches, security shutters would not be installed so that properties being advertised and the high-quality interior of the estate agency can be viewed even when the branch is closed.
- 3.3 The glazing would appear to be frameless. At its junction with the floor would be a stainless steel stallriser. There would be a full-height brushed stainless steel door handle with a stainless steel letterbox behind the door handle. At fascia level the glazing would be treated to appear frosted.
- 3.4 The glazing would be 'framed' by a surround of light-coloured stone tile cladding.

Figure 3.1 – The Proposed Shopfront



Source – Icwit Design Partnership

The Proposed Signage

- 3.5 Consistent with the aim to create a modern and sleek frontage, signage would be discreet.

- 3.6 Bonded to the shopfront glazing, non-illuminated aluminium lettering spelling the 'Foxtons' name is proposed. This would be a maximum of 0.4 metres high.
- 3.7 A projecting sign is proposed on the northern bay of the High Street elevation. This would be 2.5 metres above ground level and the sign would be 0.6 metres wide by 0.9 metres high (an area of 0.54 sq m). Whilst it is proposed that the sign would be internally-illuminated at 75 candelas per square metres, only the yellow Foxtons logo – the letter F in a circle – would be illuminated.
- 3.8 An example of this type of signage is below (**Photograph 3.1**).

Photograph 3.1 – Example of Foxtons Projecting Sign and Bonded Letters



4.0 ASSESSMENT AGAINST PLANNING POLICY

The Development Plan

4.1 The London Borough of Camden's development plan comprises the following documents:

- London Plan with Revised Early Minor Alterations (2013);
- Camden Core Strategy (2010);
- Camden Development Policies (2010);
- Camden UPD Saved Policies (2006); and
- Fitzrovia Area Action Plan (2014).

4.2 The Camden UDP Saved Policies and the Fitzrovia Action Plan do not contain any policies that are relevant towards the determination of this application. As such, these documents will not be discussed any further.

Site-specific Considerations

4.3 The Site is located in the Secondary Frontage of the designated West Hampstead Town Centre. It is also located in the West Hampstead 'Growth Area'. Neither of these designations, however, are relevant towards the application proposals.

4.4 As mentioned in **Section 2.0**, the Site is not located within a conservation area.

General Planning Policies

Design-related Policies

4.5 **Policy 7.6** (Architecture) of the London Plan states:

"B) Buildings and structures should:

a) be of the highest quality architectural quality;

b) be of a proportion, composition, scale and orientation than enhances, activates and appropriately defines the public realm; and

c) comprise details and materials that complement, not necessarily replicate, the local architectural character."

4.6 **Policy CS14** (Promoting high quality places and conserving our heritage) of the Camden Core Strategy (2010) strives to ensure that Camden's places and buildings are attractive, safe and easy to use by:

"a) requiring development of the highest standard of design that respects local context and character."

Shopfront Policies

- 4.7 **Policy DP30** (Shopfronts) of the Camden Development Policies (2010) sets out the Council's specific policy on shopfronts. It states that when considering proposals for shopfront development, the Council will consider:

- "a) the design of shopfront or feature;*
- b) the existing character, architectural and historic merit and design of the building and its shopfront;*
- c) the relationship between the shopfront and the upper floors of the building and surrounding properties, including the relationship between the shopfront and any forecourt or lightwell;*
- d) the general characteristics of shopfronts in the area; and*
- e) community safety and the contribution made by shopfronts to natural surveillance."*

Material Considerations

Camden Planning Guidance (CPG) 1 - Design

- 4.8 The proposal has been designed with reference to **Part 7** (Shopfronts) of CPG 1 – Design. **Paragraph 7.11** states that:

"Shopfront alterations should respect the detailed design, materials, colour and architectural features of the shopfront and building itself. The following will need to be considered:

- Historic, locally distinctive or characteristic shopfronts which contribute to the townscape should be retained. In some cases, the reinstatement of missing features will be encouraged;*
- New shopfronts should be designed as part of the whole building and should sensitively relate to the scale, proportions and architectural style of the building and surrounding facades;*
- Shopfronts forming part of a larger new development should be considered as an integral part of the overall design; and*
- Standardised "house-style" frontages may have to be amended in order to harmonise with the surrounding context and respect the building, particularly in conservation areas and for listed buildings."*

4.9 In respect of advertisements, **Paragraph 8.12** states that:

“the type and appearance of illuminated signs should be sympathetic to the design of the building on which it is located. The method of illumination (internal, external, lettering, neon, etc) should be determined by the design of the building. Illuminated signs should not be flashing or intermittent, whether internal or external.”

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2012)

4.10 The NPPF includes a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

4.11 **Paragraph 9** of the NPPF states that pursuing sustainable development involves seeking positive improvements in the quality of the built, natural and historic environment, as well as to people’s quality of life, including (but not limited to):

- making it easier for jobs to be created in cities, towns and villages;
- replacing poor design with better design; and
- improving the conditions in which people live, work, travel and take leisure.

4.12 **Paragraph 60** of the NPPF states:

“Planning policies and decisions should not attempt to impose architectural styles or particular tastes and they should not stifle innovation, originality or initiative through unsubstantiated requirements to conform to certain development forms or styles.”

Assessment of the Proposals

4.13 The application Site is located in a part of the High Street which displays a wide range of architectural styles with no homogenous design approach. The Site is not in a conservation area and the shopfronts on the host and neighbouring units have been significantly altered over time.

4.14 The existing shopfront is of unremarkable quality consisting of an aluminum frame powder-coated green. The multiple projecting signs either side of the fascia, the security shutters, the alarm system and the cash machine contribute to a very cluttered appearance.

4.15 Unlike the shopfronts either side of the unit (126 West End Lane and 132 West End Lane), the original pilasters and corbels of the shopfront have been removed with the only remaining historic reference being the stone fascia (hidden behind the Post Office’s fascia board).

- 4.16 The application proposal would, in our opinion, represent a significant improvement. The applicant would replace the existing shopfront with high-quality white stone tiling at ground floor level which would respond appropriately to the materials of the host building particularly the stone around the glazing on the upper floors.
- 4.17 This would surround toughened, frameless planar glass windows which, as well as being attractive, will not be obscured by shutters outside of trading hours meaning that passers-by will be able to look inside. It will also provide active frontage along this part of the High Street thereby increasing the amount of natural surveillance.
- 4.18 The separation of the glazing by a column of stone tiling will respect the vertical rhythm of the terrace by presenting the unit as two separate units rather than a double frontage. This will ensure that the shopfront will be appropriate having regard to the upper floors of its host building as well as the wider terrace.
- 4.19 Signage would be very discreet with individually-cut lettering which will be a maximum of 40 cm high, being bonded to the glazing.
- 4.20 There will be one modestly-sized projecting sign which would be in part internally-illuminated to a brightness that should be acceptable in a town centre location and which should not cause disturbance to amenity. Given that 124 West End Lane and 134 West End Lane have internally-illuminating box projecting signs, we consider that proposal is acceptable and meets the Council's guidance. Significantly, the application proposal will result in a net reduction of signage on the building as well as the removal of all existing clutter.
- 4.21 The Borough's guidance on shopfronts states that shopfronts should be designed in relation to historic and local characteristics. In this instance, the applicability of such principles is extremely limited because of the absence of original features between the retained pilasters. Hence, the applicant is proposing a high-quality and attractive modern design that will represent an enhancement when compared with the existing situation.
- 4.22 Thus we consider that the proposal is consistent with **Policy CS14** and **Policy DP30** of the Borough's policies and with London Plan **Policy 7.6**. It is also consistent with the principles set out in the Council's CPG – Design.
- 4.23 Importantly, we consider that the improvements to the visual appearance of the shopfront, in particular through the use of higher-quality materials and uncluttered design, will enhance this part of the High Road.

5.0 CONCLUDING REMARKS

- 5.1 This application seeks permission for a new shopfront and associated signage at 128-130 West End Lane, West Hampstead, NW6 1SX.
- 5.2 There is no homogenous character in the style of shopfronts in the area surrounding the application Site and the existing ground floor of the unit has no architectural features (traditional or modern) worthy of retention. A simple, sleek design approach has therefore been adopted using high-quality materials and incorporating discreet signage.
- 5.3 We consider that the proposal will have a positive effect on the local area and will be a welcome refurbishment of what is currently an undistinguished shopfront. In our view, the proposal will therefore satisfy the relevant local plan and London Plan policies as well as the general aims of the 2012 NPPF to achieve improvements to the quality of the built environment and to replace poor quality design with better design. We therefore commend this application to the Borough for approval.