

HERITAGE STATEMENT – PROPOSED STAIR FLOORS 4 AND 5 THE HEAL'S BUILDING

The entire Heals building complex is designated as of special architectural and historic interest at grade II* placing it within the category of the nation's most important listed buildings, (top 8%).

The proposal is for an internal stair linking the 4th and 5th floors at the northern end of the floor plate. The proposal would result in the removal of part of the refurbished floor on the 4th floor linking to the 5th floor above. This part of the building has previously been identified as being of 'low significance' in terms of the overall significance of the building given its Grade II* listed status. It was comprehensively refurbished in 1998 and most recently in 2013. The removal of this fabric would not therefore affect the special character of the building.

The proposed stair is required to significantly improve the accessibility of the office floorspace and allow much greater integration of the users of the space between the two floors. The introduction of the stair will significantly improve connectivity between the two floorspaces.

The building has evolved and developed since its origins in 1854 and some areas are less significant than others. A thorough assessment of the building's significance was carried out by John McAslan and Partners in 2008 as part of its Historic Structures Report for the owners. That analysis formed the basis of the approach taken for Phase 1, which is now implemented and comprises the part of the building to which this application relates.

Its principle conclusions were as follows:

- The Tottenham Court Road elevation is of very high significance. It is an outstanding example of the stripped classical style, complemented by a respectful contextual extension. The statutory list entry describes the elevation in some detail, and in the opinion of Sir Nikolaus Pevsner it is the best commercial front of its date in London."
- The spiral staircase at the rear of the 1916 Smith and Brewer building is the architectural highlight of the interior. Its dramatic geometry and high quality finishes make it one of the most important elements of the store
- The staircase and twin lifts at the southern end of the 1937 Maufe building is of high significance principally because of the dramatic window, which rises through four storeys. Externally, the window is detailed to a very high standard, and compares with Maufe's work at Guildford Cathedral
- The atrium above the first floor to the south of the spiral staircase, is the last remaining part of the original 1854 building by Lockyer, and is historically significant
- The Mansard Gallery (no longer within the Heals store) is an attractive room that was used to promote new designs and designers. It is historically significant as a reflection of Heals' position at the centre of good design

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- The Alfred Mews buildings, particularly Smith and Brewer’s 1913 bedding factory, are significant because they reflect the inter-relationship between manufacture and design, which was central to Heals. They also make a considerable contribution to the character and appearance of this part of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area, where manufacture and industry has all but disappeared.

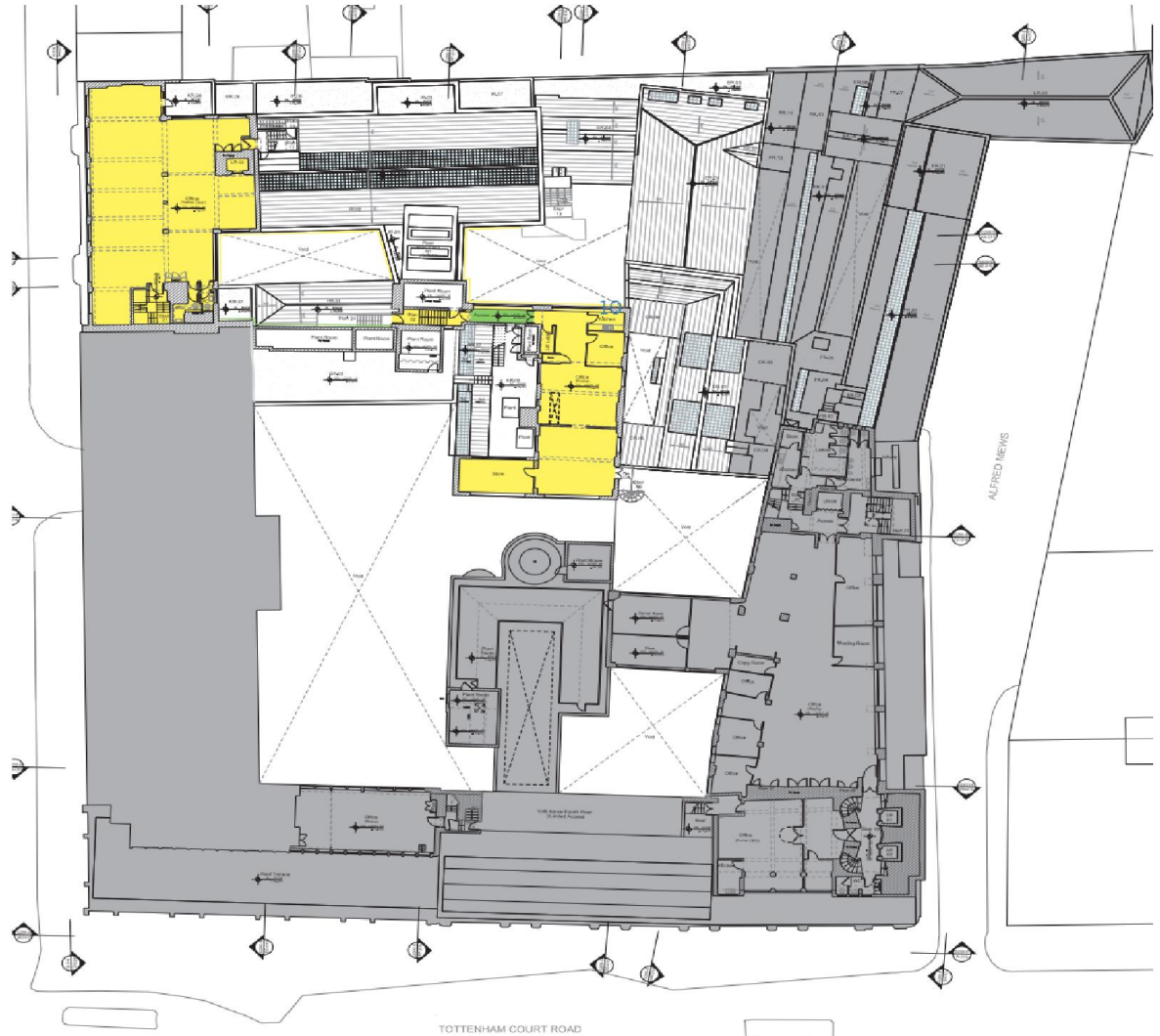
The part of the building to which the application relates is ‘**Block K**’ coloured yellow in the diagrams below this is identified by John McAslan and Partners as dating to 1936 and was the subject of refurbishment in 1998. These are identified as areas of ‘low significance’. The floorspace to which the application relates will not affect the parts of the building that are identified contributing to the heritage significance of the building.

John McAslan and Partners Areas of Significance – Fourth Floor Plan



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John McAslan and Partners Areas of Significance – Fifth Floor plan



- High Significance
- Medium Significance
- Low Significance
- Neutral
- Detrimental
- Elements Not Included In Scope

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PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

Section 16 (2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states:

‘In considering whether to grant listed building consent for any works the local planning authority or the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses’.

Paragraph 137 of the National Planning Policy Framework states that opportunities should be sought for development that enhances or better reveals significance.

Given that the proposed development will occur in an un-significant part of the building that has already been refurbished and that the proposal will facilitate circulation between two office floors it is not considered that any harm will be caused to the designated heritage asset. The proposals therefore comply with the relevant clauses of Camden’s Development Policies (2010-2025) **Policy DP25 ‘Conserving Camden’s heritage’** with clause f) which states that the Council will only grant alterations to a listed building where it considers no harm would be caused to the special interest of the building.

CONCLUSION

The proposals are required to enable effective circulation between part of the newly refurbished fourth and fifth floors. The proposals will require the removal of fabric between these two floors. The area of the proposed works is not considered have any significant or harmful effect in terms of the special interest of the listed building as the area has been identified as being of ‘low significance’. The area of the proposed works was refurbished in 1998 before the most recent 2013 refurbishment.

To this end the proposed works will not harm the special interest of the building.