

PLANNING STATEMENT

15 Grape Street, London, WC2H 8DR

JULY 2015

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1. The proposed development entails the internal refurbishment of the existing commercial unit, by installing a lift and the addition of another floor located at 15 Grape Street, London, WC2H 8DR.

2. The property was originally built around the late 19th century/ early 20th century and is a five storey building and is of traditional construction under a flat roof.

3. The proposed development entails the addition of the top floor property to provide additional commercial space.

4. The proposed development meets the criteria and standards set out in the London Plan and Bloomsbury Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy, adopted 18 April 2011, The Camden Core Strategy and the Camden Development Policies of the Local Development Framework, adopted on 8 November 2010.

5. The proposed windows will not harm the visual amenities of any neighbouring property and will preserve the character of the original building. The roof accommodation best utilises the height within the roofscape by taking advantage of the space, on this current brownfield site.

SITE

The site is situated within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area Sub Area 8, and the building offers a Positive Contribution to Grape Street as an Unlisted Building of Merit.

The building was occupied by the Cuban Embassy but now lies vacant, since January 2015. The building classification is Class B, and the proposal does not seek to change its use as commercial offices. 15 Grape Street is set over 5 storeys, comprising of a lower ground floor, ground floor, first to third floor levels.

ACCESSIBILITY

It is considered that the property is located with good public transport facilities; the site has an excellent PTAL rating of 6b. London Underground stations Holborn (Piccadilly Line) and Tottenham Court Road (Northern and Central Line) and 27 different bus routes are all within the immediate vicinity, providing excellent links for employees to access the site without the need for car parking.

DESIGN APPROACH

As 1-7 and 2-20 are Grade 2 Listed, the proposal seeks to respect the original architectural features depicted in the appearance and character within Grape Street.

The vastly glazed fenestration is beautifully framed with elegant detail using bronze framed windows, terracotta and brickwork. There is a distinct street pattern which is followed through Grape Street.

The proposal aims to continue the typical character of the area by aligning the proposed windows to the fourth floor with the lower ground floors; but also recessing the proposed front elevation wall by 2.1m in order to make it subordinate to the main original building. This will almost make the top floor addition not visible from the street level, due to the narrowness of Grape Street and that 15 and 17 Grape Street are set back from the streetview as they are located on the bend of Grape Street and the additional floor is omitted from visibility at street level.

By setting back the wall from the main façade of the building, this will also retain the dominance of the main character at the corner of Grape Street with High Holborn (currently the Cuban Embassy).

To the rear elevation, the window pattern is proposed to be replicated. All new external work shall be carried out in materials that resemble, as closely as possible, in colour and texture those of the existing building.

This will safeguard the appearance of the premises and the character of the immediate area in accordance with the requirements of policy CS14 of the London Borough of Camden Local Development Framework Core Strategy and policy DP24 and DP25 of the London Borough of Camden Local Development Framework Development Policies.

The ridge line will also be lower than its neighbour at 13 Grape Street, approved application 2015/0695/P, by approximately 600mm.

The current roof terrace would best use a brownfield site to generate employment opportunities and commercial space which is currently being lost through residential developments such as 9-13 Grape Street.

The proposal also seeks to enhance the proposal by re-introducing green space in an urban environment, which is rapidly diminishing from inner cities by providing 8m² at the Fourth floor level.

Overall these measures do not impact the conservation area and adjacent listed buildings and preserves the building and its setting through the use of architectural details, such as the cornices, windows and proportions.

SUMMARY

The proposal entails a small scale development of the additional recessed floor which is in keeping with the established character and appearance of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area.

The proposal would conform with CS8, CS9, CS11, CS13, CS14, CS16 of the London Borough of Camden Local Development Framework Core Strategy and policy DP13, DP16, DP17, DP18, DP24 and DP25 of the London Borough of Camden Local Development Framework Development Policies.