

DESIGN, ACCESS AND HERITAGE STATEMENT

Brook House, 2-16 Torrington Place, London, WC1E 7NH

Proposed Hotel Development (Permission ref. 2013/2934/P and LBC ref. 2013/3040/L)

As amended by (ref. 2014/6179/P and 2014/6166/L).

Application for Listed Building Consent

Brook House is a Grade II* listed building which forms part of the complex of buildings associated with Heal's & Habitat. The property is also located within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area and makes a positive contribution to its character or appearance.

Planning permission and listed building consent (LBC) were both granted on 8 August 2014 by decision of The Planning Inspectorate, with the development described as:

“Change of use from offices (use class B1) to hotel (use class C1); internal alterations to facilitate hotel use, replacement of existing roof top plant room with new sixth floor and new roof top plant enclosure, installation of platform lift and new entrance doors to Torrington Place, and other minor associated internal and external works.”

An application for a non material amendment to the planning permission and an application for LBC were both approved in December 2014, in order to vary the approved plans to provide for a number of larger bedrooms within the scheme and to reduce the number of hotel bedrooms from 177 to 168.

An application for LBC is now submitted to make further alterations to the approved layout in order to facilitate changes to bathroom layouts and the layout of reception, restaurant and staff office.

The application for LBC is described as:

“Internal alterations to facilitate hotel use (revised layout to that granted LBC under ref. 2013/3040/L and amended by 2014/6166/L)”

The changes to the bathroom layouts are very minor, all internal to the building and have no heritage or wider planning implications.

The change to the restaurant area does have a slight impact upon the building when viewed from the outside (but in a positive way), as by moving the staff office away from the outside wall there is no longer the need for two of the windows to be effectively blanked off, leaving a more open aspect to the street (Torrington Place). As this external change is clearly positive, with no other internal changes that are of any significance, again there are no heritage or wider planning implications of this aspect of the proposals.

Overall, given the nature of the building the changes proposed have no heritage implications. The proposed changes will not affect the character of the listed building as a building of special architectural or historic interest in any way.

The appeal decision dated 8 August 2014 confirms at paragraph 44 that *“Internally, Brook House does not retain any plan form or features of significance....”* and that *“...The existing office layout is heavily modified and is of no aesthetic or historic merit.”*

Paragraph 45 states *“Since the current commercial office makes no contribution to the significance of the building, the proposed change of use would not result in any harm to its special interest.”*

Paragraph 47 concludes as follows *“Taken as a whole, I consider that the internal and external alterations proposed would preserve the special interest of the listed building.”*

This conclusion was reached following site visit and a review of the documents that accompanied the application for listed building consent dated 16 May 2013 and subsequent appeal. These documents included a Heritage Statement prepared by Turley Associates. This report is not resubmitted as part of this application but is a useful reference point should any party wish to refer to it. The conclusions of the report were:

“The proposals will preserve the special interest of the listed building and the character and enhance the appearance of the surrounding conservation area. The significance of these designated heritage assets will be sustained and enhanced. The proposals will therefore meet the statutory duties of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, national policy set out in the NPPF (policies 131, 132, 132, 134 & 137), policies 7.8 & 7.9 of the London Plan, policy CS14 of the Core Strategy, and policy DP25 of the Development Policies, and other relevant supplementary planning guidance.”

These conclusions remain valid now, as only very minor changes are proposed to the internal layouts in order to suit updated operator requirements.

The enclosed application for LBC is submitted to ensure that the works are carried out in accordance with the approved details (condition 2 of the LBC dated 8 August 2014), as well as to comply with statute.

Smith Jenkins
22/7/14