

**Date:** 6 August 2015

**Ref:** M14108

**LB CAMDEN: 67 & 67A CAMDEN HIGH STREET, LONDON NW1 7JL**

**PLANNING AND HERITAGE STATEMENT**

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**1.0 INTRODUCTION**

1.1 This planning and heritage statement accompanies a planning application for development at the above address comprising:

*Erection of a roof addition to provide 2no 2-bed flats together with the re-modelling of the street facade and shopfronts*

1.2 The current scheme responds to the Council's refusal of an earlier planning application for a roof level addition on 17 February 2015 (ref: 2014/6277/P). The following demonstrates how the current proposal addresses the Council's reasons for refusal and will enhance the character and appearance of the Camden Town Conservation Area, potentially providing an impetus for neighbouring property owners to also enhance their properties in a similar fashion over time.

**Main issue**

1.3 The applicant would be happy to enter into a car-free s106 agreement. This would overcome the Council's second reason for refusal. Therefore the main issue requiring consideration is the first reason for refusal, namely whether the proposal would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Camden Town Conservation Area and therefore comply with policies CS5 and CS14 of the Council's Local Development Framework Core Strategy and policies DP24 and DP25 of the Local Development Framework Development Policies.

**2.0 CAMDEN TOWN CONSERVATION AREA**

2.1 The Camden Town Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy describes Camden High Street as:

*... architecturally diverse, with a lively mix of 19th and 20th century buildings. The skyline boasts a greater variety of roof forms and chimneystacks. There is a broad range of building materials, with a prevalence of brick, but including natural stone, stucco, polychromatic brickwork, concrete and instances of glazed tiles and faience.*

2.2 The application properties are not specifically referred to in the description of the High Street nor are Nos.69 to 85 which form a group - with the exception of No.75 - of properties similar age and appearance. These properties are not identified in the Strategy as buildings that make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Although they are not identified as "negative buildings" they clearly lack any individual architectural merit.

2.3 The Strategy notes:

*Shopfronts have been replaced or altered periodically, resulting in little uniformity at ground level in the High Street. Timber and aluminium frames are the most common, but the quality of their detail varies considerably. There are several examples of shopfronts with oversized signage employing garish materials, which are insensitive to their context, and fascias have been installed at different heights with irregular alignment. Many shopfronts have been fitted with out of keeping roller shutters which deaden the street frontage out of trading hours.*

The above most certainly describes the portion of the High Street within which the application properties are located.

2.4 The case officer's delegated report in response to the earlier application states:

*As a whole there is no particular consistency or distinctive architectural character along the street. Nevertheless, it is also clear that the application site together with the above stated cluster of properties [nos 69 to 77] forms part of their own particular architectural group. Officers are concerned that should permission be granted this would have a harmful effect on the composition of these properties and encourage further rooftop development that would also have a harmful impact on the terraces forever altering their character.*

2.5 It is recognised that the application properties and those to the north of it do form "their own particular group", but it is a group of limited merit that at best makes a neutral contribution to the area. The incorporation of concrete lintels above steel-framed windows suggest they are of mid 20th century origin. In our view they are best described as utilitarian.

2.6 As these buildings are not identified as positive contributors, there is no in principle basis under Policy DP25 to prevent their demolition or re-modelling subject to the new development either preserves or enhances the character or appearance of the Conservation Area (part (b) of

DP25). In our view these utilitarian properties present an opportunity to enhance the Conservation Area but this is unlikely to occur unless there is some form of incentive for property owners to do so.

### **3.0 PROPOSAL**

- 3.1 The proposal has been designed to reflect the characteristics of many of the nearby Victorian buildings that positively contribute to the appearance of the Area and those that have been built in recent years, most notably 64-70 Camden High Street opposite. In particular the frontage would be re-modelled so that the solid to void ratio and window proportions would reflect those prevalent in the Area. At ground floor level traditional shopfronts would be installed in line with the Section 7 of the Camden Planning Guide 1: Design (2014).
- 3.2 The roof addition would have a mansard arrangement at the front with a row of dormers which would line up with and reflect the proportions of the windows below.



#### 4.0 ASSESSMENT

- 4.1 Paragraph 131 of the National Planning Policy Framework states that when determining planning applications, local planning authorities should:

*.... take account of ..... the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.*

- 4.2 Paragraph 3.5 of the Camden Planning Guide 1: Design (2014) notes that:

*Conservation areas are not designated to stop all future development or change but to ensure that change is managed to conserve the historic significance of the area as a whole.*

- 4.3 The application properties make a neutral contribution to the character and appearance of the Camden Town Conservation Area. Scope therefore exists to enhance the Conservation Area through managed development. The same applies to the group of utilitarian properties to the north.

- 4.4 The proposal would reflect the key qualities of properties in the Area that make a positive contribution and at the same time represent a well-proportioned development in its own right. It would also provide a "template" for the potential future enhancement of the properties to the north and therefore considerable longterm heritage benefits.

- 4.5 For these reasons we conclude that the proposal would enhance the character and appearance of the Camden Town Conservation Area and therefore complies with LDF policies CS5, CS14 DP24 and DP25 and the aims of CPG1 and the Framework.