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Submitted via Planning Portal
PP-04531827



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19th October 2015

Dear Sirs,

**344-354 GRAYS INN ROAD, LONDON, WC1X 8BP
PROPOSED EXTERNAL ALTERATIONS TO FRONT AND REAR FACADE
APPLICATION FOR FULL PLANNING PERMISSION**

On behalf of our client, Mr Kevin Harkus, and in relation to 344-354 Grays Inn Road, London WC1X 8BP please find enclosed an application seeking full planning permission for:

"Proposed external alterations to front and rear facade including the installation of replacement mansard windows and proposed extension of rendered brickwork to arched window surround on front elevation".

The site falls within the defined boundary of the Kings Cross Conservation Area whilst the premises are further used as offices (Use Class B1). Planning permission is thus required to facilitate the installation of replacement windows at the site.

Site and surroundings

The site features a prominent building functioning as newly restored office space (Use Class B1). A series of linear planted street trees align the property on the pavement to the front and provide natural screening to the front façade.

The building is not listed but lies in Kings Cross Conservation Area.

The site falls within close proximity to Kings Cross St Pancras International and has a PTAL rating of 6b.

Existing window arrangement

The existing mansard window arrangement at 4th floor features existing aluminium sliding windows.

Existing brickwork rendering

This is evident above the existing arched window surround which is in disrepair due to frost shattered brickwork.

Proposed Development

The external alterations proposed comprise:

- The proposals are to replace the existing aluminium sliding windows and provide 16no. 3 pane and 3no. 2 pane aluminium windows;
- Proposed extension of brickwork rendering around existing arched window surround at mansard level.

Further detail on the design, specification and operation of the windows is provided within the design and access statement and submitted planning application drawings. This includes a photographic schedule.

Planning Policy Context

National Planning Policy Framework (The Framework)

The National Planning Policy Framework (The Framework) provides reference to a 'golden thread' running through plan-making and decision-taking which encourages a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Paragraph 17 of the NPPF details 'core planning principles. Including that planning should:

- *Not simply be about scrutiny, but instead be a creative exercise in finding ways to enhance and improve the places in which people live.*
- always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings.
- *Encourage the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed (brownfield land), provided that it is not of high environmental value.*
- conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations.

Camden Development Plan

Section 38(6) of the 2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act requires that planning applications are determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. As such the statutory development plan for the application site consists of:

- The Further Alterations to the London Plan (FALP) (March 2015)
- LB Camden Core Strategy (November 2010)
- LB Camden Development Policies (DPD) (November 2010)

Other material considerations include relevant supplementary planning documents (SPD) and other planning policy guidance including,

- CPG 1 Design
- CPG 3 Sustainability

Planning Assessment

Chapter 7 of the NPPF details the importance of the design of the built environment. It states that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development and should contribute positively to making places better for people. It is important to plan positively for the achievement of high quality and inclusive design for all development, including individual buildings, public and private spaces and wider area development schemes. It is noted that the design of new development will function well and add to the overall quality of the environment.

The NPPF advocates good design and high quality, inclusive development for all (policy 57). Section 7: 'Requiring Good Design' reinforces the importance of good design in achieving sustainable development, by ensuring the creation of inclusive and high quality places. Policy 58 of the NPPF states that new design should respond to the local character and history of an area and reflect its identity.

As provided in DP Policy 24, the Council will require all developments to be of the highest quality that has regard to (of relevance to the proposals):

- character, setting, context and the form and scale of neighbouring buildings;
- the character and proportions of the existing building, where alterations and extensions are proposed;
- the quality of materials to be used;
- the provision of visually interesting frontages at street level;
- the appropriate location for building services equipment;
- existing natural features, such as topography and trees.

The proposed new mansard windows are a double glazed side hung aluminium window, finished in white. The material facilitates a like for like replacement which will suitably refurb the mansard windows currently suffering from poor detailing. The installation of side hung windows instead of sliding windows however represents a more sensitive design in accordance with the setting of the Kings Cross Conservation Area and represents a significant improvement to the external building envelope.

The proposed extension to rendered brickwork will be minimal and will match existing thus remaining sympathetic to the appearance and character of the building.

On account of the above, the proposed external alterations are compliant with the following relevant planning policies:

- Core Strategy Policy CS5 that seeks to protect and enhance Camden's heritage
- Core Strategy Policy CS14 that seeks to ensure development is of a high standard of design that respects local character and preserves and enhances conservation areas
- Development Policies Policy DP24 that requires all alterations to existing buildings to be of the highest standard
- Development Policies Policy DP25 that seeks to maintain the character of Camden's conservation areas

Heritage Assessment

The Framework places much emphasis on the protection of the built historic environment. Paragraph 128 of the Framework states that, *'in determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance'*.

The proposals are to be assessed through their impact on the historic significance of the Kings Cross Conservation Area. The proposals seek subtle and minor alterations to the building through replacement aluminium windows and the extension of rendered brickwork which match the existing material aesthetic of the building.

These are considered to preserve and enhance the character of the historic environment. This serves to visibly enhance the aesthetic of the existing front and rear façade and further enhances the contribution made to the character and setting of the conservation area by the building. It is considered there will be no material harm to the external appearance of the building.

Conclusions

The above demonstrates the proposed works to install replacement windows are acceptable in terms of design and impact on the conservation area and thus accord with planning policy. Therefore planning permission should be granted.

The planning application has been submitted via the planning portal (ref. PP-04531827) with requisite fee of £195 and comprises this letter detailing planning considerations, design and access statement, the application forms and a complete set of drawings as listed:

- 15.0224.001 - Site Location Plan;
- 15.0224.002 - Block Plan;
- 15.0224.003 - Front Elevation as existing and proposed;
- 15.0224.004 - Rear Elevation as existing and proposed;
- GREY-EL-01 REV B 2 – Window Type 1;
- GREY-EL-02 REV C – Window Type 2.

I trust this meets your requirements and I look forward to hearing from you shortly with confirmation of the registration and validation of the planning application.

Yours faithfully



James Dempster
Planner