

INTRODUCTION

The application seeks planning permission for the following development proposal: The non-intrusive installation of PV cells to the existing flat roof of the Heals' Building in Tottenham Court Road

This statement addresses the requirements of PPS5 (March 2010) which states that applicants should:

Provide a description of the significance of any heritage assets and the contribution of their setting to that significance (Policy HE6.1) and

An assessment of the impact of the proposal on the heritage assets (Policy HE6.2).

HERITAGE ASSETS

The building in question This building is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest. The Grade is II*.

The listing text is as follows:

“Includes: Nos.18-26 TORRINGTON PLACE. Department store and warehouse. Original central section of frontage 5-window bays 1914-17 by Cecil C Brewer and A Dunbar Smith; southern extension of 5 bays with identical style of elevation 1936-8 by Edward Maufe; northern extension of 7 bays in a complementary idiom of 1961-2 by Fitzroy Robinson and Partners. Portland stone facing on a steel frame throughout. Pan-tiled mansard roof with dormers. EXTERIOR: 4 storeys, attic and basement. Central and southern section in stripped Classical style have free-standing octagonal columns with bronze bases and caps to ground floor carrying plain entablature. Plate glass display windows are set back behind an arcade. On upper storeys, piers rise above columns to abbreviated capitals and deep entablature having enriched cornice and incised Roman lettering with the dates MDCCCX, MCMXVI and MCMXXXVII and the name "Heal and Son" (twice). The voids between the piers in alternating rhythm of single and triple lights divided by stone pilasters and filled with close-paned steel windows for 2 storeys, and continuous steel windows recessed on the 3rd storey. The spandrels between 1st and 2nd floors carry cast metal panels in low relief with colour designed by Joseph Armitage and depicting various wares and implements, eg. textiles, sheep shears, a bed, teazle, pottery wheel and vase. The northern extension has a similar rhythm of bays and identical storey heights with the entablatures ranging through. Entrance in right hand bay with projecting hood bearing the royal coat of arms. Square piers to the ground floor, the set back display windows on the front and return to Torrington Place having curving nonreflective glass. Attic recessed with flat roof and projecting frame for windowcleaning cradle. The windows between piers of larger steel sections, the spandrels between 1st and 2nd floors here filled with ceramic blue and cream relief panels designed by John Farleigh and made by Kenneth Clark and depicting wares interspersed with large letters "H" for Heals. INTERIOR: notable chiefly for the circular wooden staircase within a well at the rear of the store, built as part of the Smith and Brewer work in 1914-17. Both Heals and Habitat are entered through the 1960s building at ground-floor level and their plans are confusing on the other floors; they have no division corresponding to the periods of the building but over-and-undersail each over.”

Adjacent listed buildings include Minerva House on North Crescent and Glen House In Alfred Mews / Tottenham Court Road.

The building is situated in the Bloomsbury Conservation Area. Across the road is the Charlotte Street Conservation Area.

POLICY CONTEXT

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) refers to Conserving and enhancing the historic environment in chapter 12.

Bloomsbury Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Statement:

“Development proposals must preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area. This requirement applies equally to developments which are outside the Conservation Area but would affect its setting or views into or out of the area.”

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT AND ANALYSIS

- The listing information describes the mansard roof enclosing the 4th and 5th floors of the building (underlined), but not on the flat roof of the set back volumes at 6th floor level.
- The adjacent listed buildings are of the same height as 1 Alfred Mews and do not overlook the flat roofs.
- The part of the roof envisaged to receive the PV cells is covered in modern asphalt felt and seems to have been resurfaced in the last 15 years.
- The proposed PV panel solution does not need to penetrate the top layer of the roof, so will not impact in any way on the integrity of the roof.

CONCLUSIONS

We believe that the proposed Photovoltaic cells proposed to the roof will not harm the fabric, setting or character of the building or any of it's neighbours but will instead enhance the adaptation to climate change of the building by introducing the means to generate electric energy.