

Department of the Built Environment

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London Borough of Camden, Town Hall,
Judd Street, London, WC1H 9JE



Officer: Ben Eley

Your ref 2016/2094/P

Date 22 July 2016

Dear Ms Quigley,

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT (1990)
150 HOLBORN, LONDON, EC1N 2NS (REF: 2016/2094/P)

Demolition of existing building and redevelopment for a mixed-use development up to 9 storeys in height comprising 14,604sqm GEA office floorspace (use class B1), 1,450sqm GEA retail floorspace (use class A1-A3), 13 residential units (use class C3), improvements to the public realm and all other necessary enabling works.

Thank you for consulting the City of London. This letter contains our initial response to the planning application.

The City's main consideration on the potential impact of the development focuses on Staple Inn, an important and rare collection of listed buildings opposite the site, whilst we also pass comment on View 4A.1 of the London View Management Framework.

The setting of the Stable Inn

Relevant Statutory Designations

The site is opposite the Chancery Lane Conservation Area and 1-4 and 337-338 Holborn. For the avoidance of doubt, these buildings are listed at grade I and grade II* respectively. There was an error on the Historic England website which until recently listed the whole range as grade II*.

To the rear of these, Staple Inn quadrangle comprises 4-6 Staple Inn (grade I), 7-8, 9-10 and Staple Inn Hall (all grade II). To the rear of this is Staple Inn gardens, enclosed by 1-3 Staple Inn, Staple Inn Hall (both grade II), 10 Furnival Street and Southampton Buildings (both grade II*).

Significance of Staple Inn Buildings

1-4 and 337-338 Holborn, dating from 1586, are a rare and fine example of Elizabethan buildings that survived the Great Fire. As an early example of a conservation project, by noted architect

Alfred Waterhouse, they comprise an evocative landmark defining the camber in High Holborn, at the junction with Grey's Inn Road. They provide a unique example of secular Medieval London.

Staple Inn quadrangle forms the heart of an important collegiate townscape of considerable architectural and historic interest. Enclosed by neat and dignified 18th Century terraces, its ambiance and set-piece character is accentuated by a remarkable groundscape, mature trees and a (independently listed) street lamp column and water pump. Staple Inn gardens, a roughly rectangular space, is a charming layering of high quality buildings centred on the hall, originally an Elizabethan brick building crowned by an ogee cupola.

As a townscape set-piece and sequence, this ensemble of highly significant designated heritage assets comprises a rare ancient legal inn, Great Fire survivals and secular late Medieval architecture which (despite much re-building), retains a setting with a strong identity, integrity, authenticity and sense of place.

Impact on views from Staple Inn Quadrangle and Staple Inn Gardens

The application submission makes no reference to Staple Inn. This should form part of the Heritage and Townscape Assessments.

These assessments should include an assessment as to whether the additional height and bulk proposed would be visible from Staple Inn quadrangle or from Staple Inn gardens. The Chancery Lane Conservation Area Character Summary and Management Strategy (adopted February 2016) identifies the view of Stable Inn Hall from the entrance to the garden from Southampton Buildings as an important view in the Conservation Area (View 16).

Given the significance of this ensemble of listed buildings, we would request verified confirmation as to the potential impact on views from these spaces and an assessment of the impact on the relevant heritage assets. Please contact Ben Eley should you wish to agree viewpoints to and from within the Inn.

Impact on setting of 1-4 and 337-338 High Holborn

The notable and rare half-timbered range facing Holborn currently enjoys a degree of pre-eminence at the junction between Holborn and Grey's Inn Road. The current building on the site is of little merit, it is however a contextual 'townscape' building which in terms of form, height, materiality and massing, recedes to the whole rather than defining its own setting.

It is considered that a building of the proposed height, scale, massing and bulk would be unduly assertive, wresting attention from the layered urban grain on High Holborn, in particular the much more delicate scale of 1-4 and 337-338 High Holborn. This would appear particularly apparent in kinetic views south towards the full extent of the timber-framed range from Grey's Inn, where the proposal would comprise an overly dominant 'book end' and while creating an unbalanced 'canyon effect'. The design should be reconsidered to provide a contextual building in terms of a scale, materiality and massing which better reflects the historic urban grain in this sensitive setting.

Impact on View 4A.1 of London View Management Framework (LVMF)

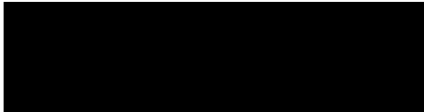
The site falls within the protected landmark viewing corridor from Primrose Hill towards St Paul's Cathedral.

Our calculations confirm that the site has a threshold plane ranging between 54.869 – 55.087 Above Ordinance Datum (AOD). The tallest point of the proposed building would be 54.45 AOD. Thus, the proposal would be very near the maximum site threshold.

Should the application be approved, we would recommend a condition be added requiring no projections above ridge level without the written permission of the local planning authority, to ensure the preservation of protected LVMF View 4A.1.

Please contact Ben Eley on the above extension if you wish to discuss the matters referred to above.

Yours sincerely,



Ted Rayment
Assistant Director (Development Management)