

Statement of Community Involvement

61, 63 and 65 Charlotte Street, Camden

Prepared for Merchant Land

by

HardHat.

February 2015

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1. Introduction

This Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) forms part of the planning application submission on behalf of Merchant Land for the properties comprising 61, 63, 65 Charlotte Street, in the London Borough of Camden.

The SCI concerns proposals for the refurbishment of 61, 63 and 65 Charlotte Street to provide (**Insert agreed proposals**).

HardHat was appointed to undertake pre-application consultation on these proposals. HardHat contacted local residents, Councillors and stakeholders before holding a public exhibition showcasing the plans for the site. Members of the development team were present to answer questions raised by attendees.

The Localism Bill introduced by the Coalition Government in 2010 focused on the requirement for public consultation and involvement of local communities, including a move towards:

- Greater community empowerment
- A radical reboot of the planning system, including neighbourhood planning

Consultation and communication with the local community will continue throughout the planning and construction phases of the development.

Planning Policy encourages comprehensive community involvement and pre-application discussions to help shape appropriate development proposals. A core part of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which was published on 27th March 2012, is to encourage community involvement in the planning process.

The NPPF encourages applicants to engage in pre-application consultation with the local community. In paragraphs 188-191, the NPPF states:

“Early engagement has significant potential to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning application system for all parties. Good quality pre-application discussion enables better coordination between public and private resources and improved outcomes for the community. Local planning authorities have a key role to play in encouraging other parties to take maximum advantage of the pre-application stage. They cannot require that a developer engages with them before submitting a planning application, but they should encourage take-up of any preapplication services they do offer. They should also, where they think this would be beneficial, encourage any applicants who are not already required to do so by law to engage with the local community before submitting their applications.

The more issues that can be resolved at pre-application stage, the greater the benefits. For their role in the planning system to be effective and positive, statutory planning consultees will need to take the same early, pro-active approach, and provide advice in a timely manner throughout the development process. This assists local planning authorities in issuing timely decisions, helping to ensure that applicants do not experience unnecessary delays and costs.

The participation of other consenting bodies in pre-application discussions should enable early consideration of all the fundamental issues relating to whether a particular development will be acceptable in principle, even where other consents relating to how a development is built or operated are needed at a later stage. Wherever possible, parallel processing of other consents should be encouraged to help speed up the process and resolve any issues as early as possible.”

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2. Record of Consultation

The strategy for public exhibition follows a standard approach used previously in the London Borough of Camden.

The public exhibition was held on Monday 15th December 2014. The event ran from 1630 until 2000 to ensure that people could attend outside working hours. The exhibition was held on site at 61 Charlotte Street.

The venue was chosen so that people would understand the context of the scheme and could see the current state of the site. It also provided easy access for all residents and attendees.

The consultation area was drawn up to maximise attendees. In total, 999 invitation letters were sent out to residents and businesses in the surrounding area. The distribution area can be seen in Appendix A. A sample of the invitation letter is available in Appendix B.

Invitations were also issued to the three Ward Councillors and local stakeholders. A list of the stakeholders can be found in Appendix C.

The following members of the development team attended the Public Exhibition:

- Katherine McCullough – Merchant Land (Developer)
- Jennifer Kot – Merchant Land (Developer)
- Seamus Porter - Merchant Land (Developer)
- Tom Vernon – Quod (Planning Consultants)
- Niki Marshall – Harper Downie (Architects)
- John Greenshields – HardHat. (Communications Consultants)
- Chris Sharp – HardHat. (Communications Consultants)

There were 15 attendees over the course of the afternoon and evening, consisting mainly of local residents along with representatives from local businesses and other stakeholders.

Feedback forms were available at the public exhibition for attendees to complete, alongside the opportunity to provide verbal feedback to the development team.

A copy of the feedback form can be found in Appendix D.

Exhibition boards were displayed to show the layout of the proposals and benefits of the scheme for local residents. The aim was to make the boards informative, whilst remaining accessible to a wider audience. Copies can be found in Appendix E.

Other Meetings held

Bloomsbury Conservation Area Advisory Committee

Before the exhibition was held members of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area Advisory Committee (BCAAC) were invited for a tour of the accessible parts of 61 and 63 Charlotte Street.

Members of the design team were present, along with the Construction Manager. The tour lasted approximately 35 minutes and was attended by four members of BCAAC.

Following the tour, the chair of the BCAAC emailed the following comments:

Bloomsbury Conservation Area Advisory Committee

*c/o Hugh Cullum Architects
61B Judd Street
London WC1H 9QT
Tel 020 7383 7647
Fax 020 7387 7645
BCAAC@hughcullum.com*

Dear John,

Thanks for organising yesterday's meeting. It was very useful.

We had a number of observations which you might want to take on board at this stage:

1 We would strongly resist the loss of the original 'M' profile roofs. These are fairly complete and original fabric and I'm sure the Camden conservation officers would take a similar view (as they have elsewhere).

2 We would strongly resist the loss of the staircase to No.63 which appears to have many original parts remaining. Apart from the loss of historic fabric we are also keen to preserve the historic pattern of access from the street with each separate building having its own entrance and staircase. In addition the connection through the party walls is undesirable from a historic buildings and conservation area viewpoint.

3 We were surprised by how much remains of the original interiors in 61 and 63 with door cases, staircases, cornicing and fireplaces all original survivals from the Georgian period.

4 We would urge the preservation and restoration of the very fine early C20 shopfront to No.63 and the cornice and brackets to No.61. The remaining renewals should be sympathetic in design to their host buildings and the conservation area.

5 We were unable to view the entrance and staircase at No.65 but it should be assessed to check whether it has original fabric and, if so, this could be retained and

restored.

Please get in touch if you have any questions.

Kind regards,

Hugh Cullum

The design team considered these points and were able to reply to the points raised as below:

1 We would strongly resist the loss of the original 'M' profile roofs. These are fairly complete and original fabric and I'm sure the Camden conservation officers would take a similar view (as they have elsewhere).

We are in conversation with Camden Council about the potential options and will keep you updated.

2 We would strongly resist the loss of the staircase to No.63 which appears to have many original parts remaining. Apart from the loss of historic fabric we are also keen to preserve the historic pattern of access from the street with each separate building having its own entrance and staircase. In addition the connection through the party walls is undesirable from a historic buildings and conservation area viewpoint.

We would like to explore options with you around retaining the front door. The buildings are not listed and the refurbishment needed to provide the modern employment space we are proposing would make preserving the internal décor difficult. We will keep an open mind though and can catalogue any interesting features in an historic building record.

3 We were surprised by how much remains of the original interiors in 61 and 63 with door cases, staircases, cornicing and fireplaces all original survivals from the Georgian period.

Please see answer above.

4 We would urge the preservation and restoration of the very fine early C20 shopfront to No.63 and the cornice and brackets to No.61. The remaining renewals should be sympathetic in design to their host buildings and the conservation area.

We are intending to restore this and would welcome your involvement in

how this design takes shape.

5 We were unable to view the entrance and staircase at No.65 but it should be assessed to check whether it has original fabric and, if so, this could be retained and restored.

We have not been able to access the staircase at 65 for inspection, however the proposal will retain this element in its entirety.

This response was coupled with an invitation to discuss with the architect ideas for restoring the frontage of 61 and 63 Charlotte Street.

The Fitzrovia Partnership Business Improvement District

As a local stakeholder, the manager of the Fitzrovia Partnership BID was invited to attend the public exhibition.

The Fitzrovia Partnership were keen to meet following the public exhibition to hear the views of the attendees.

A meeting was organised in December 2014 for members of the design team to meet Lee Lyons and Graham Philpott from the Fitzrovia Partnership. The meeting was positive and the Fitzrovia Partnership were pleased that the building was being brought back into commercial use.

At the initial it was agreed that a further meeting would be held in early 2015 to go through the construction plan more fully with the Fitzrovia Partnership.

Immediate Neighbours

Throughout the application process close contact was maintained with the immediate residential neighbours in 65 Charlotte Street.

Members of the design team attended meetings with the residents, and were able to include them in design developments.

Plans are currently being discussed to establish what sort of mitigation package will be suitable for the residents of 65 Charlotte Street.

As the design process has developed, the Construction Director met with the commercial tenants at 59 and 67 Charlotte Street to discuss construction issues such as the basement impact study and site access.

All negotiations have been positive and reflect the long term commitment the applicant has to occupying the refurbished office space.

3. Exhibition feedback

Of the 15 people who attended, 11 signed in and left address details.

We received three feedback forms at the exhibition. Approximately four attendees took away feedback forms to post back at a later date.

PDF copies of the exhibition boards were sent to all residents who left their email addresses with the exhibition organisers.

The consultation remained open for comments until submission in February 2015.

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4. Feedback Forms

The feedback forms offered a single question about whether the exhibition was useful, and a free field for general comments.

A copy of the feedback forms can be found in Appendix F. Below is a table of the comments received:

Comment
“This scheme is perfectly acceptable for Charlotte Street. I think it is important that the exterior has been left as it is mote or less. The grass roof at the back is a good idea”
“OK. Important to retain in later development: 1 Retail/Café use on ground 2 Building to go no higher than adding one floor 3 central building to retain the rounded window on the top front floor”
“A happy resident”

5. Issues raised

The following issues were raised verbally during the public exhibition to staff.

Mansard roof extension

There was a mixed reaction to the extension, some attendees were opposed to any extension, some wanted to see more information on the type of building material being proposed.

Use class at ground floor level

A number of attendees were keen to see the ground floor units remain as A1 use class and not become late night restaurants. This is in line with the aims of Merchant Land.

Green Roof

Most attendees were supportive of the plans to establish a green roof at the rear of the buildings.

Tree Planting

Following the exhibition an idea was raised to plant a tree at the corner of Scala Street and Charlotte Street to help blend the building into the street. The design team agreed to consider this and discuss it with Officers at the London Borough of Camden.

Size of potential businesses

At the exhibition it was suggested that future occupiers of the office space should be for businesses with between five and ten employees. It was explained that Merchant Land and Parent company Holbud are both classified SME.

6. Follow up meetings

BCAAC

A follow up meeting was organised for BCAAC members and the development team to demonstrate how the design had evolved following their feedback.

Where possible the comments on façade have been incorporated into the design to be submitted. Primarily these are:

- Retention of the residential doorway at 63 Charlotte Street
- Restoration of the shop front at 61 Charlotte Street
- Retaining and emphasizing the shop frontages

Members of the BCAAC welcomed these changes.

During the meeting future signage of the commercial units was discussed. It was agreed that as owner/occupiers the applicant would be happy to only install sympathetic signage to 61 and 63 Charlotte Street.

The proposed Mansard roof extension was also discussed at the meeting. It was explained that the current designs had been developed with Camden Council involved, to ensure that a suitable mix of residential units could be provided on site, as opposed to small 1 bed or studio apartments.

The BCAAC members present made it clear that they would not support the mansard extension, and were likely to oppose the scheme on this point.

There was discussion about the applicant producing a toolkit for the BCAAC to use for evaluating the designs that affect the original fabric remaining in Bloomsbury, something that will be looked into.

The meeting concluded with an agreement to maintain contact and update the BCAAC, via the Chair, of any major developments.

The Fitzrovia Partnership

As agreed, a meeting was organised to allow the Construction Manager to talk through some of the key aspects of the planned build process, such as temporary loading bays.

The meeting was organised close to submission to allow for the construction place to be discussed in detail.

The meeting was positive and the Fitzrovia Partnership were keen to remain updated on the proposals.

7. Feedback responses

Through the consultation activity, Merchant Land has identified that there is support for the refurbishment of 61, 63 and 65 Charlotte Street, along with the retention of commercial space at ground floor level.

Comments and concerns from the amenity groups who engaged with the consultation have been noted. Where possible the ideas will be incorporated into the final scheme, but there is recognition that this might not be possible.

Merchant Land have undertaken to continue contact with interested stakeholders to ensure changes are developed with the community.

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8. Summary

Merchant Land has considered, where possible, the suggestions and points raised by residents and other stakeholders. This is in addition to the points raised through engaging in pre-application discussions with officers at the London Borough of Camden.

There is support from a majority of people who engaged with the public consultation exercise for the refurbishment of 61, 63 and 65 Charlotte Street to bring the building back into commercial use.

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Appendix B – Invitation for Residents

Public Exhibition
Invitation

December 4 2014

Dear Neighbour,

Merchant Land would like to invite you to a public exhibition discussing the plans being drawn up for 61, 63 and 65 Charlotte Street.

Previous planning applications for these buildings have led to a confused set of buildings and spaces to the rear of the properties that have become dilapidated over time.

Our intention is to modernise the buildings, providing a clean, flexible working space for Merchant Land to occupy, including new commercial units for local businesses and a small number of homes.

We are currently working on the designs and would like to know your thoughts.

The exhibition will be held at:

4.30-8.00pm
15th December 2014
61 Charlotte Street
London
W1T 4PG

Members of the design team will be present to answer any questions and discuss the plans.

We hope to see you there.

Kind regards,

Katherine McCullough
Merchant Land



61, 63 and 65 Charlotte Street

Appendix C – Local Stakeholders

Bloomsbury Conservation Area Advisory Committee

Charlotte Street Association

The Fitzrovia Partnership

Cllr Francis, Bloomsbury Ward Councillor

Cllr Harrison, Bloomsbury Ward Councillor

Cllr Madlani, Bloomsbury Ward Councillor

Cllr Jones, Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Transport & Planning

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Appendix D – Feedback Form

CHARLOTTE STREET EXHIBITION

Feedback form

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone _____ Email _____

Did you find this exhibition useful? YES NO

Do you have any comments on the proposals?



DK

Appendix E – Exhibition Boards



WELCOME

Welcome and thank you for coming to the exhibition today. The following boards will show you the details of what we hope to achieve at 61, 63 and 65 Charlotte Street.

Merchant Land is a 20 year old UK property investment company. We use our experience, autonomy, passion for excellence and fair to create and deliver projects of which we are proud.

As we celebrate our 20th anniversary in the UK this year we are proud of our culture, tradition and committed team at both management and board level, which enables us to utilise key strengths in our approach to projects:

Creative lateral and seasoned thinking;

A commitment to excellence;

Respect and collaboration with all of our delivery partners and end users;

A genuine consideration for the legacy and long-term environmental and aesthetic impact of our projects.

Members of the design team are here and happy to answer any questions you may have.



Aerial view from North



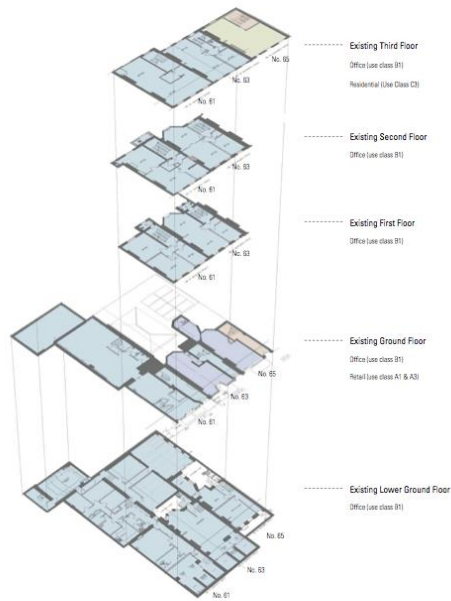
Photograph of 61-65 Charlotte Street as existing

61-65 Charlotte Street | 15, December 2014 | Public Exhibition

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INSIDE 61,63 & 65 CHARLOTTE STREET

The properties at 61, 63, 65 Charlotte Street are located within the Charlotte Street Conservation Area and the buildings are not listed. The existing properties are run down and dilapidated. Merchant Land are hoping to invest in the restoration of the interiors for an SME occupier that has already signed up to occupy the office space as its London HQ along with Merchant Land who will also relocate there. The scheme will also provide attractive retail units and a small number of homes.



Existing Summary

Office (use class B1)	1004 sq.m
Residential (use class C3)	61 sq.m
Retail (use class A1)	72 sq.m



Existing photographs

61-65 Charlotte Street | 15, December 2014 | Public Exhibition

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OUTSIDE 61,63 & 65 CHARLOTTE STREET

Charlotte Street is an important part of Bloomsbury and we are keen to preserve the character of the area.

From the outside, the noticeable elements of the proposals will be the high quality enhancement of the shop-fronts at street level, tidying up the façade detailing and a sympathetic mansard roof extension. To the rear of the properties attractive green roofs will be installed to increase biodiversity in the area and improve visual amenity.



Aerial view from North



Proposed Rear view



61 Charlotte Street | 63 Charlotte Street | 65 Charlotte Street | Existing Street Elevation



Proposed Front Elevation

61-65 Charlotte Street | 15, December 2014 | Public Exhibition

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APPLICATION DETAILS

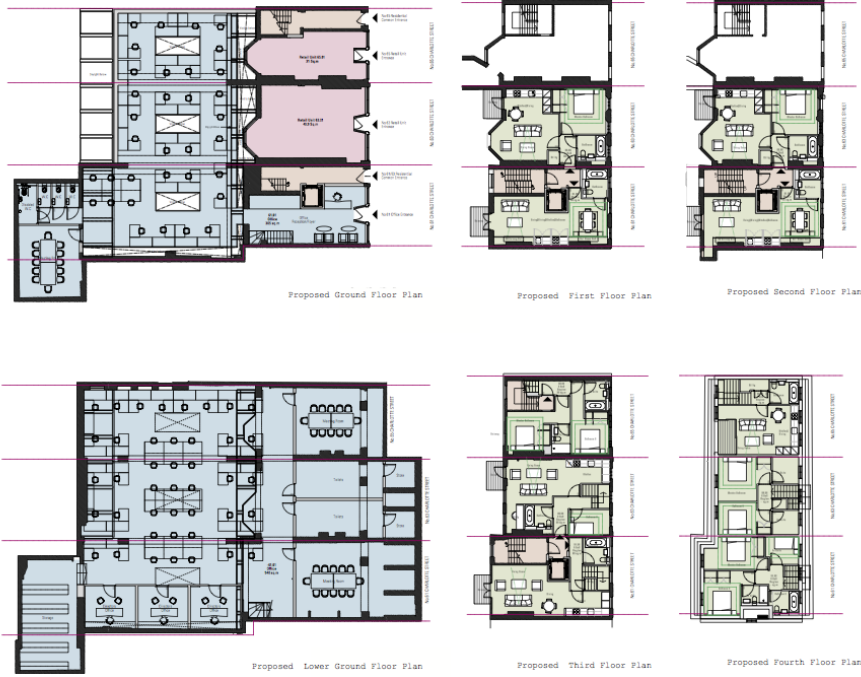
The proposals work to facilitate the building and local part of Charlotte Street to be brought back to life from its current derelict, vacant condition.

The proposals seek to replace the existing rear extension in order to optimize office use on the site and suit the needs and requirements of Merchant Land Investments Ltd and Holbud Ltd, whilst being careful to maintain the extension's subordinate status and its contribution to the conservation area. The front facade and main buildings are proposed to be retained and enhanced, maintaining the architectural quality of the existing building and conservation area and providing new residential accommodation.

A subordinate mansard roof extension to the main building is proposed, maintaining the roof-line and character of the existing street, whilst providing additional residential use on the site.

Proposal Summary

Office (use class B1)	841 sq.m
Residential (use class C3) (2 x studio, 2 x 1 bed, 1 x 2 bed, 2 x 3 bed)	456 sq.m
Retail (use class A1)	81 sq.m



61-65 Charlotte Street | 15, December 2014 | Public Exhibition

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NEXT STEPS

Thank you for coming along today.

We are keen to know what you think about the plans, and would be grateful if you could fill out the short questionnaire.

We will keep you informed about the plans as they progress. If you have any questions please contact jgreenshields@hardhat.co.uk



61-65 Charlotte Street | 15, December 2014 | Public Exhibition

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Appendix F – scanned copies of feedback forms

CHARLOTTE STREET EXHIBITION

Feedback form

Name MORRIS PATERSON

Address ELISA COURT

Telephone 07843 273153 Email morris.paterason@gmail.com

Did you find this exhibition useful? YES NO

Do you have any comments on the proposals?

A happy resident!



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CHARLOTTE STREET EXHIBITION
Feedback form

Name JANET GAULD

Address 102 RIDSMOUNT GARDENS

Telephone 020 7580 9452 Email -

Did you find this exhibition useful? YES NO

Do you have any comments on the proposals?

This scheme is perfectly acceptable for Charlotte Street. I think it is important that the exterior has been left as it is, more or less. The grass roof at the back is a good idea.



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CHARLOTTE STREET EXHIBITION

Feedback form

Name MICHAEL ROMBERG

Address 7, MAXCLIF HOUSE, TOTTENHAM ST, WIT 2AG

Telephone _____ Email MR3112@hotmail.co.uk

Did you find this exhibition useful? YES NO

Do you have any comments on the proposals?

- OK. IMPORTANT TO RETAIN IN LATER DEVELOPMENT
- ① RETAIN RETAIL/CAFE USE ON GROUND
 - ② BUILDING TO GO NO HIGHER THAN ADDING ONE FLOOR
 - ③ CENTRAL BUILDING TO RETAIN THE ROUNDED WINDOW ON TOP FRONT FLOOR



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