

# PLANNING & HERIATGE CONSIDERATIONS STATEMENT

1 Fitzroy Square London W1T 5HE

Use of ground floor front room as reception/office in association with permitted medical consulting rooms at lower gorund floor.

(More specifically, use of ground floor front room north side of entrance as either B1 or D1 in accordance with Schedule 2, Part 3, Class V of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order )



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**A S S O C I A T E S**  
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## **1.0 Preamble**

- 1.1 This statement accompanies a planning and listed building application for the change of use of one room on the ground floor of Adam House, 1 Fitzroy Square W1. The building is listed Grade 1 (list description at appendix A)
- 1.2 The room is to the north side of the ground floor entrance to the building. It is referred to on the Valuation Office website as 'ground floor front room left'.
- 1.3 The room has been much altered (see photos at appendix B) and has no finishes or details of note.
- 1.4 The proposal is a change of use from office (Use Class B1) to a dual or alternative uses as either B1 (office) or D1 (clinic or other non-residential institutional use) in accordance with Sch 2, Part 3 Class V of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order.
- 1.5 The Class allows for dual or alternative uses of a planning unit.
- 1.6 There is no link leading from this room to any other room, access between the room and any other part of the building being via the common parts.
- 1.7 The Town and Country Planning (Development Management (Procedure) (England) Order 2015 sets out the circumstances in which a statutory design and access statement is required. Statements are not required for a change of use.
- 1.8 However, the application includes an application for listed building consent for the minor alterations to the ground floor front room.
- 1.9 The NPPF states at para 128 that, in determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected. As a listed building this property is a heritage asset.
- 1.10 The NPPF continues that the level of detail provided 'should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact

of the proposal'. This statement is the assessment of the heritage asset and is proportionate to the importance of the building.

## **2.0 Location**

2.1 The property is at the south west corner of Fitzroy Square with a return elevation onto Grafton Way. The major part of the accommodation of the building as a whole is in the rear portion fronting Grafton Way.

2.2 The frontage building is of Georgian proportions but the return elevation gives way to a 1950's elevation after 2 window bays.

2.3 The Fitzroy Square elevation is of basement, ground, 1<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> floors which as noted soon gives way to the Grafton Way elevation which is of basement, ground, 1<sup>st</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> floors with 3 floors achieved in the height occupied by the ground and 1<sup>st</sup> floors of the frontage building.

2.4 There is a rear service entrance from Grafton Mews.

## **3.0 Heritage assessment**

3.1 The property is listed Grade 1 along with the adjoining 2 – 8 Fitzroy Square.

3.2 However, the List Description notes that 1 & 1A Fitzroy Square were rebuilt in the 1950's following bomb damage (presumably during the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War).

3.3 It is assumed that the Grafton Way frontage and the interior of the building was part of the post-war reconstruction.

3.4 The front room is shown in the photographs at appendix B. It will be seen that the interior of the room is entirely devoid of period details. The ceiling is entirely smooth with downlighters and the room lacks a cornice.

3.5 The skirting board is a plain piece of (assumed) timber with no moulding.

- 3.6 There is a prominent downstand towards the middle of the room. It is assumed from the external elevations that this is the point where the additional floor has been inserted in the rear building.
- 3.7 The entry into the room is to the rear part from the common lobby. There is evidence of another door into the front part of the room which has been blocked up. This is also evident from the lobby.
- 3.8 The room has been partitioned with a part glazed partition in the rear part of the room.
- 3.9 Despite the official designation of the building as being Listed Grade 1 the significance of this building is quite clearly low. It is of limited inherent interest.
- 3.10 The proposals are to re-use the blocked doorway as an entry into the unit and to partition the rear part (beyond the downstand) to create store rooms and consulting/interview rooms.
- 3.11 The details of the new door and internal partitions are not yet available but can reasonably be conditioned.
- 3.12 Given the current non-original state of the premises the proposals do not affect the character of the building as a building of historic interest.
- 4.0 **Local Plan designations.**
- 4.1 The Camden 'policies map' (interactive version) gives the relevant designations as being in a conservation area, within the designated Central London and within the Fitzrovia Action Area.
- 4.2 The site is also within a strategic viewing corridor which is not relevant to this application.

## **5.0 Character of the Square**

5.1 The Square has a mix of B1 and institutional uses. There are also some residential uses in the Square.

5.2 No4 Fitzroy Square is occupied by the British Dermatological Society.

5.3 No 6 is occupied by the Georgian Group, a national charity for the preservation of Georgian buildings but who also advise the premises as being a 'venue' for hire for events, including for wedding receptions and conferences.

5.4 No 14 Fitzroy Square is used in part as a dental practice and in part as a cosmetic surgeons'.

5.5 No 31 Fitzroy Square is occupied by the Fitzrovia Medical Centre.

5.6 The Square is also host to the High Commission of Mozambique at No 21 and the Embassy of Liberia at No 23.

5.7 No28 is occupied by the Magistrate's Association.

## **6.0 Current Use**

6.1 The building is multi-occupied and the entrance to the building is from Fitzroy Square and is shared.

6.2 Access to the basement and upper floors is then via either the internal stair or lift.

6.3 There is a side entrance from Grafton Way and a rear service entrance from Grafton Mews.

6.4 The Valuation Office website gives the use of the whole building as 'office and premises' but as 16 separate assessments, confirming that this is a multi-occupied building.

6.5 The Valuation Office record the 'ground floor front left, Adam House' as office and premises with a rateable area of 60.4m<sup>2</sup>. This is the smallest unit of occupation in the building.

6.6 The premises are not suited to non-office activities in the B1 Use Class (such as industry).

6.7 In November 2015 Camden Council permitted the use of the basement as medical consulting rooms (ref 2015/4755/P).

#### **7.0 Proposed use.**

7.1 The proposal is to use the ground floor front room left (or north) as office, reception and waiting area for the permitted use of the basement.

7.2 This will as noted involve partitioning the room.

#### **8.0 Planning policy**

8.1 The Development Plan comprises the London Plan, which is primarily strategic guidance, and the Camden Core Strategy, the Development Policies Document and the Fitzrovia Action Area Plan.

8.2 As noted in a preceding section, the Camden local plan policies map (interactive version) designates the site part of 'central London'.

8.3 Core Strategy policy CS9 addresses 'Central London'. It notes that the southern part of Camden plays an important part in providing the vibrancy, diversity and identity that makes the borough such a popular place to visit and live in. It continues that this part of the Borough, designated 'Central London' contains a significant proportion of the borough's office floorspace and is home to many other uses, including legal, health and professional services.

8.4 Policy CS9 states that the Council will support and promote the Central London area of Camden as a successful and vibrant part of the capital to live in, work in and visit. It continues that the Council will recognise its unique role and character and

challenges and will support Central London as a focus for Camden's future growth in homes, offices and other uses. It further states that the Council will support the concentration of medical, educational, cultural and research institutions within central London. The accompanying text states at para 9.4 that the Council will seek to promote a successful Central London area while achieving a balance between the interests of its residents and the area's economic, social and cultural use and roles.

- 8.5 Core Strategy policy CS8 advises that the Council will secure a strong economy in Camden and seeks to ensure that no one is excluded from its success. The policy states at sub para (b) that the Council will support Camden's industries by safeguarding existing employment sites and premises in the borough that meet the needs of modern industry and other employers.
- 8.6 The policy further states at sub para (f) that the Borough recognise the importance of other employment generating uses, including retail, markets, leisure, education, tourism and health.
- 8.7 Development Policies document policy DP13 is reproduced in full at appendix A. It states that the Council will retain land and buildings that are suitable for continued business use unless it can be demonstrated that the premises are no longer suitable and there is evidence that the possibility of retaining the use has been fully explored.
- 8.8 The accompanying para 13.4 explains what building characteristics enable the future flexible use of business premises. These features include clear space with few supporting columns, adequate floor to ceiling heights, wide doors and good natural light.
- 8.9 Healthcare is included under the heading of community uses under policy DP15. The policy does not include any directly applicable advice.
- 8.10 The Fitzrovia Action Area Plan 'Principle 4' states that the Council will support small and medium enterprises (SMEs) by seeking to ensure that existing business premises suitable for SME use are retained and new business development designed to allow parts to be occupied SMEs.

8.11 The accompanying text explains that the Plan's objectives include promoting small and medium scale businesses (firms with fewer than 250 employees) which are a valued part of the character of Fitzrovia. It explains that 60% of those working in the area are employed by firms with fewer than 200 employees. For such businesses to establish themselves and flourish, the area needs to retain and add to the range of small and medium-sized premises. The Council will particularly seek to maintain a supply of premises that can provide lettings of less than 100 sq m.

## **9.0 Considerations**

9.1 The application premises were previously in office use.

9.2 It is accepted that the council's planning policies are intended to protect office use. However, we believe there are grounds for an exception in this case.

9.3 First, the office unit in question is small – 60m<sup>2</sup> - and due to the layout of the building is not convenient to be used with any other office unit in the building.

9.4 Second it is understood that the room has a somewhat 'patchy' letting history with a series of short term lets followed by periods of vacancy.

9.5 Third, the proposed use in association with the permitted use of the lower ground floor as medical consulting rooms is an appropriate use in itself. This is further explained in the following paragraphs.

9.6 Health uses are recognised in the Core Strategy (and in the London Plan) as part of the appropriate mix of uses in Central London. The demand from residents, visitors and employees for various treatments, including cosmetic treatments needs to be met.

9.7 However, health uses face an obvious problem in finding suitable accommodation in that planning policies (not only in Camden but in other boroughs as well) seek to protect almost all other uses. The locational options for health uses, particularly smaller specialist clinics, are extremely limited almost to the point of exclusion.



- 9.8 There is therefore a mismatch between the recognition that such uses are part of the character and function of central London and in the provision for those uses. In practice health uses are only allowed as an exception.
- 9.9 The use of the basement of the premises as a clinic was granted as just such an exception.
- 9.10 The addition of the ground floor front room would improve the profile of the clinic and assist patients and other visitors by providing a place to register convenient to the entrance and from where they can be escorted to the lower ground floor consulting rooms.
- 9.11 The front room will also be used for office administration of the clinic and also for some administration of other clinics run by the applicants.
- 9.12 As such, the use of the ground floor front room will largely be for an office function albeit in connection primarily with the lower ground floor medical use.
- 9.13 Policy dictates that health uses cannot replace employment uses unless the premises have been marketed for an extended period. Few premises in central London will be in such poor condition that no occupier can be found during a period of extended marketing. However, it is understood that the premises have a patchy record of short term use and there is little doubt that further marketing would only result in this being repeated.
- 9.14 In comparison, there is a recognised need for health uses, which clearly support the working and resident population. This in itself is of benefit to the wider population.
- 9.15 As noted on the previous application, the clinic use as a whole generates employment, ranging from skilled to unskilled clerical and support roles.
- 9.16 Fitzroy Square is very suited to such a use. Not only are there other similar uses in the Square but the location is readily accessible by means other than the private car.

9.17 The Public Transport Accessibility Level (PTAL) is 6B. Euston Station is within 900 metres and there are several tube stations including Warren Street (Victoria and Northern lines) Great Portland Street (Circle, Metropolitan, Hammersmith & City) and Regent's Park (Bakerloo) at least 14 bus services within the allowed distance for PTAL calculations. Tottenham Court Road tube station – and the future CrossRail station – are just beyond the reckonable distance.

9.18 Finally, the proposed use would not preclude the future business use of the premises. The proposal is for 'flexible use' which would allow the building to revert to office use at any point during the next 10 years.

9.19 Alternatively, if appropriate, a condition could be imposed requiring reversion.

## **10.0 Conclusion**

10.1 It is recognised that the change of use of employment premises is generally resisted.

10.2 We are asking for an exception in this instance.

10.3 The proposed use will assist in the success of the lower ground floor medical consulting rooms.

10.4 Camden Council has already recognised that the medical consulting room use of the lower ground floor is appropriate. In doing so they accepted that the use is recognised as an appropriate Central London use.

10.5 As noted, there are however few opportunities for such uses. Fitzroy Square, with a mix of office, medical and institutional uses is an appropriate location for such uses.

10.6 The proposal accords with the character and function of the area.

## Details

### CAMDEN

TQ2982SW FITZROY SQUARE 798-1/93/446 (East side) 10/06/54 Nos.1, 1A AND 2-8 (Consecutive) and attached railings and lamp-holders (Formerly Listed as: FITZROY SQUARE Nos.1 & 1A, 2-10 (Consecutive))

### GV I

Terrace of 8 houses forming, with Nos 9 & 10, (qv), the east side of Fitzroy Square. c1792-4. By Robert and James Adam. **Nos 1 and 1A restored 1950s after bomb damage.** Portland stone with rusticated ground floor. Plain 2nd floor sill band. EXTERIOR: 4 storeys and basements. 17 window range. Symmetrical facade (including south bay only of No.8) with 5 centre bays and 3 bays at each end projecting. Round-arched openings at ground floor level with impost bands. Sash windows in shallow, plain recesses. No.7 with rectangular C20 office window. Doorways with pilaster-jambs carrying cornice-heads, some with radial patterned fanlights, panelled doors. 1st floor centre bays with distyle-in-antis recessed, attached Ionic columns rising through the 2nd floor to support the entablature. Square-headed sash windows in shallow round-arched recesses with pilasters. Square-headed, recessed sashes to 2nd floor. End pavilions with distyle-in-antis recessed columns forming a tripartite window with Diocletian window above. Either side, 1st floor window square-headed in shallow round-arched recess with pilasters. Square-headed, recessed sashes to 2nd floor. Wings with square-headed, recessed sashes. All 1st floor windows with cast-iron balconies, those on the wings continuous. Entablature with part of the frieze enriched at 3rd floor level. Attic storey with recessed sashes, the centre bay having pilasters above the columns and oculi to each outer bay. Northern pavilion with round-arched windows to outer bays and central oculus. Cornice and blocking course. INTERIORS: mostly plain with enriched ceiling cornices. Stone staircases with iron balusters and some marble fireplaces. SUBSIDIARY FEATURES: attached cast-iron railings with urn finials to areas, Nos 4 & 5 with cast-iron lamp-holders. HISTORICAL NOTE: No.7 was the home of Sir Charles Eastlake, painter & first Director of the National Gallery (GLC plaque). No.8: entrance bay forms north bay of symmetrical facade. 2 bays to left do not form part of the composition and are of a more simple design. Plain ashlar with slate mansard roof and dormers. 3 storeys and attic. 2 windows. Recessed sash windows with 1st floor balconies. Cornice and balustraded parapet. (See also Nos 9 & 10 Fitzroy Square.) (Survey of London: Vol. XXI, Tottenham Court Road and Neighbourhood, St Pancras III: London: -1949: 52-8; Lees-Milne J: The Age of Adam: London and New York: -1947: 129-130).

Listing NGR: TQ2919582115



1. Above, room looking towards front.
2. Left, outline of former doorway

1 Fitzroy Square. Front room left. Planning and heritage statement



3. Above. Looking towards rear of room, note lower ceiling in rear part

4. Below left. Skirting, typical.

5. Below right, ceiling, typical

