

JO/DM/P6364  
27<sup>th</sup> October 2016

Development Management Planning Services  
London Borough of Camden  
Town Hall  
Argyle Street  
London  
WC1H 8ND

Dear Sirs

**Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (As Amended)**  
**1 Birkenhead Street, London, WC1H 8BA**  
**Listed Building Application – Internal and external alterations.**  
**PP-05587131**

We are writing on behalf of our clients Fresson & Tee in support of the application being made by the freeholders of the above property, Lonprop Establishment. This has been submitted via the planning portal and relates to the above property and a series of internal and external alterations to the listed building.

It should however be noted that the external alterations proposed already have the benefit of both planning permission and listed building consent which were granted earlier this year on the 13<sup>th</sup> April 2016 (Refs: 2016/0903/L and 2015/6470/P). This application therefore seeks to concern itself with a series of revised internal alterations to the basement, ground and upper floors.

Overall these alterations will remove unsympathetic modern partitions and to return the house more closely to its original plan form. Further details are provided below and within the accompanying Heritage Appraisal.

No fees are required for a standalone listed building application.

In order to assist you with your consideration of this application please find the following information which has been submitted electronically via the Planning Portal:

- Application form and certificates
- Site Location Plan
- Existing, Proposed and detailed drawings prepared by Fresson & Tee
- Covering Letter
- Heritage Appraisal prepared by Martin O'Rourke

**Site Description**

The site is located just to the south of the Euston Road close to Kings Cross and St Pancras Station.

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The property itself is part of a grade II listed terrace of 7 houses built between c1827 and 1832 and is located within the Kings Cross / St Pancras Conservation Area. Whilst it is still currently used as a small hotel planning permission in April 2016 was been granted for a change of use to offices (Class B1).

Despite its central location Birkenhead Street is a quiet side street which would have originally been residential in character. It currently has a mix of uses including offices and residential flats. The wider area incorporates a host of retail and entertainment uses including shops, hotels, bars, cafes and restaurants.

### **Relevant Planning History**

Listed building consent was granted in April 2008 (Ref: 2008/0852/L). This approved the installation of glazed double doors between the entrance hallway and front room, as well as the insertion of a door at third floor level.

The officers report noted that the original partition had already been removed within the ground floor at some point in its past, and that the current partition had been pushed further into the front room. It also noted that throughout the building the original doors had all been replaced with modern flat doors. It also noted that the rooms at third floor level retained none of their original character.

In 2012 permission and listed building consent (Ref: 2012/2400/P) were refused for the erection of three two-storey pods, with associated raised access walkways and staircase, and one single storey pod within mews courtyard, to be used as 7 additional bedrooms to the existing Rough Luxe Hotel.

On 13th April 2016 planning permission and listed building consent (Refs: 2016/0903/L and 2015/6470/P) were granted for the use of the property as offices, with associated internal and external alterations.

### **Background and Pre-application Consultation**

This listed building application proposes to revise the internal alterations which were previously granted consent in April 2016 under reference 2016/0903/L.

Following receipt of this decision our clients have reviewed the market conditions and the type of lets which are more likely to be secured for a building of this type and size. As a result of this a series of revisions to the scheme are proposed which have necessitated this follow up submission.

### **Proposals and Policy considerations**

The proposals include the following-

- Installation of single glazed six-over-six sliding sash timber windows on both the front and rear elevations as detailed within the proposed drawings and details drawings and as previously consented
- Installation of historically appropriate six-panelled timber entrance doors to both the front and rear (as consented)
- The removal of hotel ensuite bathrooms and all modern partitions
- The original staircase would be retained and repaired
- The historic plan form at ground, first, second and third floors would be referenced throughout with the use of reinstated partitions and/or nib walls.
- Relocation of toilets to basement, and dropping of floor within pavement vaults by circa 500mm

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### Heritage and Design

As with the previous application a full Heritage Appraisal has been produced by Martin O'Rourke and accompanies this application. This appraisal sets out the history of the site and provides a detailed commentary on the building and the proposed alterations.

The building is part of a grade II listed terrace. However, the building has clearly been compromised over the years and several interventions over its history have resulted in a muddled non-historic plan form and inappropriate modern windows and doors to the front and rear, which have a harmful impact upon the appearance of this building and the wider conservation area.

These proposals propose a series of alterations both internally and externally which will return much of the building to its historic plan and will repair and restore the buildings facades and historic integrity. The external alterations have previously been granted consent, and remain part of these proposals – and as such I do not intend to go over these details again. However, it is worth mentioning that the upgrading of the fenestration to both the front and rear of the building represents a significant improvement to the building and its contribution to the wider listed terrace and conservation area.

### Basement

The main thrust of the revised proposals is the relocation of the toilets to the basement. This allows for the removal of the previously consented interventions on the upper floors from the scheme and allows for better office circulation space within the more lettable spaces. It is also proposed to provide a small kitchen to the front of the basement within the vaults area. In order to gain the necessary head height, the floor within the vaults will have to be dropped by approximately 500mm.

### Ground

Following a review of the previous decisions, it has been advised that a smoke lobby is required for Building Regulation purposes at ground floor level; therefore we are proposing a simple pair of fire-rated frameless glass doors within what is a modern archway at ground floor level. It is considered that this simple approach, which is fully reversible, allows the space and plan form of the listed building to be appreciated without creating an incongruous intervention.

The existing pair of modern doors from the entrance hall into the front room will also be replaced by a single painted panelled door.

### First floor

The alterations at this level remain as shown on the approved drawing 22581-P03, with the exception of the removal of the W.C, and the installation of a single painted timber panel door instead of a glazed swing door.

### Second and Third Floors

Aside from the removal of the toilets from these upper floors the proposed plans remain the same as shown on the previously consented drawings 22581-P04 and 22581-P05.

The benefits arising from these alterations above, coupled with the less intensive office use already consented, are considered to significantly outweigh any perceived impact upon the special historic or architectural interest of the building, and as such should be considered acceptable in light of the guidance outlined within paragraphs 126 (as set out in the accompanying Heritage Appraisal), 128, and specifically 131 and 134 of the NPPF, which are set out below..

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Paragraph 131 of the NPPF states that in *determining planning applications, local planning authorities should take account of:*

- *the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;*
- *the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and*
- *the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.*

Paragraph 134 of the NPPF states that *where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use.*

The London Plan seeks to:

- Identify, value, conserve, restore, re-use and incorporate heritage assets, where appropriate and development affecting heritage assets and their settings should conserve their significance, by being sympathetic to their form, scale, materials and architectural detail (**Policy 7.8**).
- Make use of heritage assets and reinforce the qualities that make them significant so they can help stimulate environmental, economic and community regeneration. This includes buildings, landscape features, views, Blue Ribbon Network and public realm (**Policy 7.9**).

In line with the adopted London Plan policies, the proposed works will preserve and reinstate the key features of the building whilst the interventions will be sympathetic to the buildings original plan form, materials and architectural detail.

Development Plan **Policy DP24 – Securing High Quality Design** states the principles enshrined within Core Strategy policy CS14 – Promoting high quality places and conserving our heritage will ensure that all parts of Camden’s environment are designed to the highest possible standards and contribute to providing a healthy, safe and attractive environment.

Development Plan **Policy DP25 – Conserving Camden’s Heritage** states that the council will only grant consent for a change of use or alterations and extensions to a listed building where it considers this would not cause harm to the special interest of the building.

The application will accord with the relevant Camden planning policies as the proposed building seeks to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the Kings Cross Conservation Area and the seeks to enhance the buildings historic integrity.

As an overall package it is considered that the proposals are in line with CS14, DP24 and DP25 and will therefore enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area, its setting and will not cause harm to the special interest of the listed building. .

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**Conclusion**

The scheme clearly brings benefit in the form of the increased and improved commercial accommodation, and will result in an increase in the level of employment generated by the site. It also provides the opportunity to significantly enhance this listed building which has suffered from several unsympathetic alterations and additions over the years.

Having regard to the above and the enclosed material, we trust the council will agree that the proposals are acceptable and look forward to receiving a speedy and positive decision. However should you require any further information or wish to discuss any of the enclosures please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned.

Yours faithfully



John Osborn  
Rolfe Judd Planning Limited