

Charlotte Street Association

39 Tottenham Street
London W1T 4RX

**Regeneration & Planning,
Development Management,**
London Borough of Camden,
Town Hall, Judd Street, London WC1H 8ND.

19th October 2016

For the attention of Patrick Marfleet, Planning Officer.

By email to: planning@camden.gov.uk

Dear Patrick Marfleet,

Re: ref. 2016/3446/P: 39 Tottenham Street, W1T 4RX

Change of Use of neighbourhood advice centre (Class D1) at ground & basement levels, and HMO (Class C4) on 1st to 3rd floors;
to a commercial unit (Class A1/A2) on ground floor, and 3 flats at basement, 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th floor levels, together with a mansard roof addition; demolition and rebuild of infill extension between 39 Tottenham St and 14 Goodge Place; opening-up of lightwells; refurbishment of shop frontage and replacement windows to upper levels.

I am writing on behalf of the Charlotte Street Association.

We wish to object to proposals in the application concerning this Listed Building (Grade 2) in the Charlotte Street Conservation Area, for the reasons set out below.

(1). Loss of community facility:

We object to the loss of the community facility on the Ground Floor and Basement (neighbourhood advice centre on the ground and basement floors). There is the need for continued community use in the area/Fitzrovia, including both advice and community activities (such as the Fitzrovia News - the longest running community newspaper in UK), as well as computer & photocopying facilities for use by community groups. The Fitzrovia Centre in Foley Street does not, unfortunately, provide accommodation or replacement facilities.

(2). Affordable housing element:

Two units have been designated as affordable; there should be a commitment that these units should be socially rented.

(3). Lowering the basement floor: increasing height of basement storey:

Although we appreciate that structural engineering advice has no doubt been taken, we nonetheless have reservations about the stability of the building due to the proposed underpinning to lower the basement floor level. This is a relatively fragile building, taking into account its "exposed" structural corner location, and the old metal column structure at Ground Floor.

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(4). New replacement side extension:

We object to the design of the replacement side extension – its design is disappointing, and does not do justice to the Listed Building, nor to the adjoining Listed terrace next to it in Goodge Place.

The new design does not necessarily have to be traditional, but:

- (a). The proportions of the windows are uncomfortable; their proportions (not necessarily their size) need to be similar to those of the main building.
- (b). The variety has been lost by aligning these new windows (in terms of height and cill level) to those of the main building. One of the main characteristics of the Georgian terrace buildings in this part of Fitzrovia is the small deviations (and thus variety) because houses (even within the same terrace) were built by different owners (unlike in the Bloomsbury area where houses are much more regimented due to being built by one/same large landowner).
- (c). We also object to the proposed mono-pitched roof to the side extension. We think that a brick parapet (with a flat roof behind) would be much more in character with the Listed Building and with the adjoining/next door Listed terrace in Goodge Place. The setting of this adjoining Listed terrace needs to be taken into account; it has the typical Georgian simple brick parapet. The proposed mono-pitched roof would appear as too fussy in this context.
- (d). The design of the proposed door appears quite inappropriate.

(5). Chimney breast and chimney stack on south wall:

We strongly object to the loss of the prominent chimney breast on the southern wall, as well as the consequential rebuilding of the tall chimney stack, both of which should be retained as original in this Listed Building. Rebuilding, however well done, is no match in terms of character and weathering to retaining the original external stack. The loss of the breast at each floor level and the re-building of the external stack would significantly alter the character of this Listed Building.

(6). Existing timber panelling in Ground Floor entrance corridor:

No mention appears to be made about the existing timber panelling in the entrance corridor passageway. This is a typical feature in the Georgian terraced houses in the immediate local streets here in Fitzrovia (e.g. in other houses in Tottenham Street, and in nearby Goodge Place). It is an important quality of the Listed Building and should be retained. We would strongly object to its loss.

(7). Renewal of timber windows:

We would ask that there is a condition that details of the proposed timber sections are submitted for approval. All too often, the timber sections of replacement windows in Georgian terraced houses in Fitzrovia are too thick, (and especially the “meeting rails” of the vertical sliding sash windows). The main characteristic of Georgian (sash) windows is their slimness and elegance of their timber sections..

(8). Proposed opening up of basement lightwells, and railings:

- (a). We wish to query the opening up on the Goodge Place frontage; it is not clear how the Basement Plan and Ground Floor plan marry up. It would appear that the proposed railings at Ground Floor/street level will be enclosing two areas of open basement “lightwell” and two further areas of solid ground at street level. We wish to object to this “run” of railings; the railings on the Goodge Place

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frontage should be reduced and enclose the two open Basement areas only.

- (b). There should be a condition that sectional details of the railings are submitted; all too often such railings are too thin, and the relationship to a shopfront poor.

(9). The "Millenium" Mural on the Goodge Place elevation:

The elevation drawing notes that "The Mural is to be recorded; wall upgraded; and mural reinstated on completion." We are greatly concerned at, and object to, the loss of the original mural. It was especially carried out in 2000/2001 with the aid of a Lottery Millenium grant, and was painted by a well known London mural artist, Brian Barnes. It shows figures of local & historical importance. Also, the design of the existing mural extends over the elevation of the existing side extension. We also object to this part of the mural being lost as it is integral to the overall design. If the original is to be lost, then there should be a Condition that the reinstated Mural is carried out by the same mural artist, Brian Barnes. Also, the Condition should include that the re-instated mural extends the full length of the elevation including the side extension, so as to match the existing original design.

(10). Design and Access Statement:

We would like to point out that at the start of this Statement (para 2.3) it says that the "... *property is within the West Bloomsbury Conservation Area, also known as Charlotte Street Conservation Area ...*". This is not so - the property is not within the West Bloomsbury Conservation Area. In any case, the Bloomsbury Conservation Area ends at, and is to the east of, Tottenham Court Road.

The Charlotte Street Conservation Area is a separate conservation area, with its own Charlotte Street Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (adopted July 2008).

For the all above reasons, we think that planning permission should not be granted.

Yours sincerely,

Clive Henderson
Committee Member
Charlotte Street Association.

Copy: CSA Committee.
Bloomsbury Conservation Area Advisory Committee.