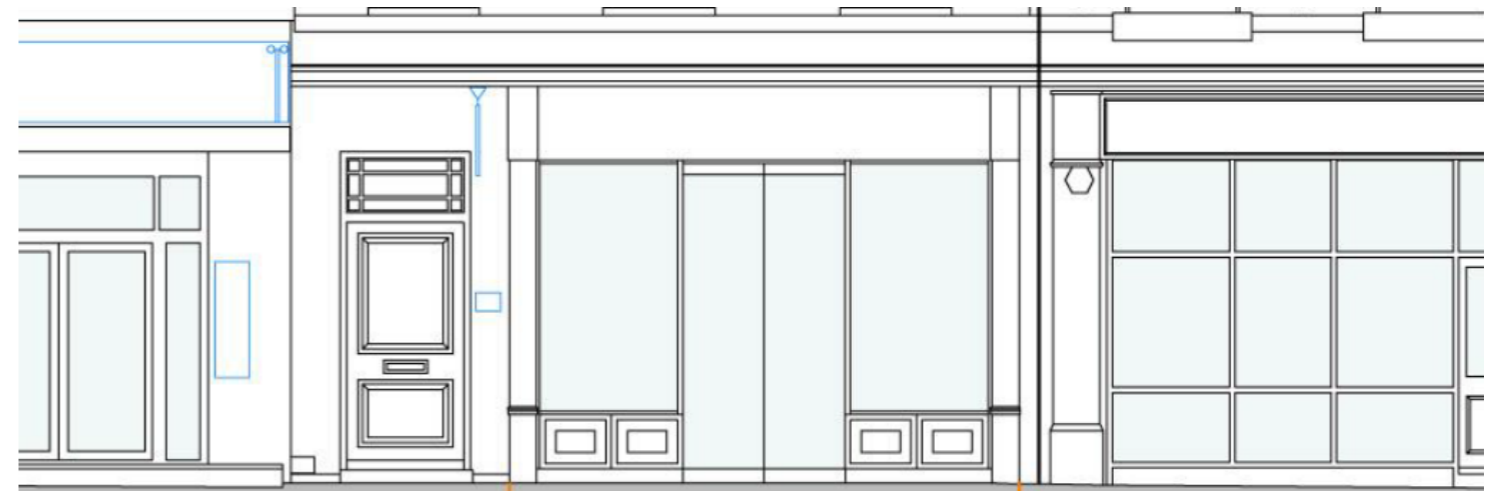


Heritage Statement



15 Percy Street, Camden

On Behalf of Build 8

December 2016

Project Ref: 3064A

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Project Number: 3064A **Date:** 05/12/2016
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Reviewed by: Design Team

INTRODUCTION

1. This Heritage Statement has been prepared by Heritage Collective, on behalf of Build 8. It relates to a proposed refurbishment and alteration of the ground and basement floor retail unit at No.15 Percy Street. Located within the London Borough of Camden (LB Camden) the site includes one listed building (No.15 Percy Street) and is within the Charlotte Street Conservation Area. (**Plate 1 and Figure 1**).
2. Located on the south-east side of Percy Street the retail unit sits within a late 18th century former town house which forms part of a listed terrace, Nos.15-18 Percy Street. Nos.12-13, 14, 19 and 20 Percy Street are also listed, all grade II. The list description reads;

4 terraced houses and later shops. 1764-70, altered. Refaced above ground floor in facsimile. Built by W Franks, W Richmond, H Roydhouse and J Pritchett. Multi-coloured stock brick with slated mansard roofs and dormers. Cement cornice and 1st floor sill band. 3 storeys, attics and basements. 3 windows each except No.16 with 2 windows. Gauged red brick flat arches to recessed sash windows with glazing bars. Parapets. Nos 15 to 17: C20 shop and restaurant frontages. No.18: C20 simplified reproduction of former early C19 wooden double shopfront with bowed windows. Square-headed house doorway. INTERIORS: not inspected.
3. It is proposed to refit the retail unit at ground floor and basement floor and to alter the shop front. No change is proposed to the upper floors or the entrance to the upper floors from the street (to the left of the shop front).
4. Initial proposals were presented to LB Camden by others and following the advice given Palmer Lunn Architects and Heritage Collective have been engaged to advise on the works and assess the proposed works more thoroughly. Advice to the applicant with regard to the design of the shop front and the effect of the interior works has shaped the proposed submission.
5. In addition documentary research has been undertaken to understand the significance of the assets involved. Little detailed information for the building exists but the planning history suggests that the retail unit has undergone significant change throughout its history.
6. This statement provides information to LB Camden on the heritage significance of the relevant assets potentially affected by the proposed works. It sets out, in a proportionate manner, the significance of the assets and the effect of the works as well as compliance with local and national policy as required by Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).



Plate 1: Front Elevation of No.15 Percy Street



Figure 1: Map showing application site in red. Listed buildings/terrace marked with blue triangles, the Charlotte Street Conservation Area in purple and the Bloomsbury Conservation Area in blue.

POLICY AND GUIDANCE

Legislation

7. Legislation relating to listed buildings and conservation areas is contained in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Section 66 of the Act places a duty on the decision maker to have special regard to the desirability of preserving listed buildings and their settings. Section 72 of the Act places a similar duty on the decision maker to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas. The 1990 Act is to be given considerable importance and weight in the planning process. The presumptions in the 1990 Act will plainly become less strong the smaller the effect or the lower the significance of the asset.

National Planning Policy Framework 2012

8. The NPPF constitutes the Government's national guidance and policy regarding development in the historic environment. It is a material consideration and includes a succinct policy framework for local planning authorities and decision takers. It relates to planning law by stating that applications are to be determined in accordance with the local plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
9. Paragraphs 126 to 141 of the NPPF deal with conserving and enhancing the historic environment. Paragraph 128 of the NPPF places a duty on the Local Planning Authority (LPA) to require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected by a proposal, providing a proportionate level of detail. The effects of any development on a heritage asset therefore need to be assessed against the four components of its heritage significance: its archaeological, architectural, artistic and historic interests. This report fulfils that requirement.
10. Paragraph 129 requires LPAs to identify and take into account "*the particular significance of any heritage asset*". This should be taken into account when considering the impact of proposed changes to a heritage asset, including by development affecting its setting.
11. Paragraph 131 requires local planning authorities to have regard to the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets, the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities, and the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.
12. Paragraph 132 applies specifically to designated heritage assets. It states that great weight should be given to their conservation and it requires a proportionate approach (i.e. the more important the asset, the greater the weight attached to its conservation).
13. Conservation (for heritage policy) is defined in Annex 2 of the NPPF:

"The process of maintaining and managing change to a heritage asset in a way that sustains and, where appropriate, enhances its significance."
14. The importance and relevance of this definition is that it does not suggest conservation to be the same as preservation. Indeed, what sets conservation apart is the emphasis on proactively maintaining and managing change and not on a reactive approach to resisting change.
15. Paragraphs 131 to 134 describe two levels of potential harm that can be caused to the significance of designated heritage assets, namely substantial harm and less than substantial harm. These effects are to be weighed in the planning balance according to the guidance set out within paragraphs 131 to 134, bearing in mind the statutory provisions above.
16. Paragraph 133 deals with substantial harm to, or total loss of, significance of a designated heritage asset and sets out a series of tests to be met in order for substantial harm to a designated heritage asset to be considered acceptable.
17. The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) describes the threshold for substantial harm as a "high test" which may not arise in many cases; the total or partial destruction of heritage assets are given as examples.

17. Paragraph 134 of the NPPF deals with less than substantial harm. Harm in this category should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. The PPG describes public benefits as "anything that delivers economic, social or environmental progress".
18. Harm is defined by Historic England as a change which erodes the significance of a heritage asset. It is not simply change in itself.

The London Plan (2015)

20. The London Plan (March 2015 consolidated with alterations since 2011) is the overall strategic plan for London and it forms part of the development plan for Greater London.
21. London Plan Policy 7.8 seeks to ensure that heritage assets are valued, conserved, restored and reused. All development affecting the significance of heritage assets should be sympathetic in terms of scale, form, materials and architectural detailing.

Local Plan

22. The London Borough of Camden Local Plan is made up of the Core Strategy, Development Policies and Supplementary Planning Guidance. Core Strategy Policy CS14 'Promoting high quality places and conserving our heritage' is of relevance to this site. As is Development Policy 25, Conserving Camden's Heritage.

Conservation areas

In order to maintain the character of Camden's conservation areas, the Council will:

- a) take account of conservation area statements, appraisals and management plans when assessing applications within conservation areas;*
- b) only permit development within conservation areas that preserves and enhances the character and appearance of the area;*
- c) prevent the total or substantial demolition of an unlisted building that makes a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a conservation area where this harms the character or appearance of the conservation area, unless exceptional circumstances are shown that outweigh the case for retention;*
- d) not permit development outside of a conservation area that causes harm to the character and appearance of that conservation area; and*
- e) preserve trees and garden spaces which contribute to the character of a conservation area and which provide a setting for Camden's architectural heritage.*

Listed buildings

To preserve or enhance the borough's listed buildings, the Council will:

- e) prevent the total or substantial demolition of a listed building unless exceptional circumstances are shown that outweigh the case for retention;*
- f) 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; and*
- g) not permit development that it considers would cause harm to the setting of a listed building.*

RELEVANT BACKGROUND

23. Built in 1764-70 the terrace occupying the south-east side of Percy Street forms a typical late Georgian terrace of brick houses, three windows wide with modern shop fronts at ground floor level. All the houses have ground floor extensions to the rear, providing deep retail units, often lit by roof lights on a flat roof at ground floor. Originally the houses had two windows and a door at ground floor level with open light wells to the front providing light into basement spaces. This arrangement has been lost on the entire terrace.
24. According to the Survey of London authored in 1949 the façade of No.15 Percy Street was repaired following Bomb Damage, evidenced by the appearance of the front elevation of the building. It is not specifically mentioned other than being part of a larger group of buildings that have 20th century shop fronts. This is in contrast to other properties on the street that retain original doors and doorcases and have inhabitants of note.
25. A blue plaque on No.15 indicates Charles Laughton, an Actor lived there between 1928 and 1931.
26. The planning history for No.15 Percy Street is relatively brief;
 - In 1983 consent was given for alterations and works of refurbishment at 3rd floor level.
 - In January 1984, an application regarding the use of the second floor was withdrawn.
 - In July 1984, consent was refused for retention of an illuminated fascia sign. Drawings attached to the application show the existing elevation (**Figure 3**). In August 1984 consent was refused for retention of new shop front.
 - In 1998, consent was given for internal alterations involving works to the first and third floors, involving replacing modern finish doors with panelled doors.
 - In 2013 consent was given for the installation of a non-illuminated projecting sign adjacent to the entrance to the upper floors.



Plate 2: 1963 Photograph of Percy Street terrace

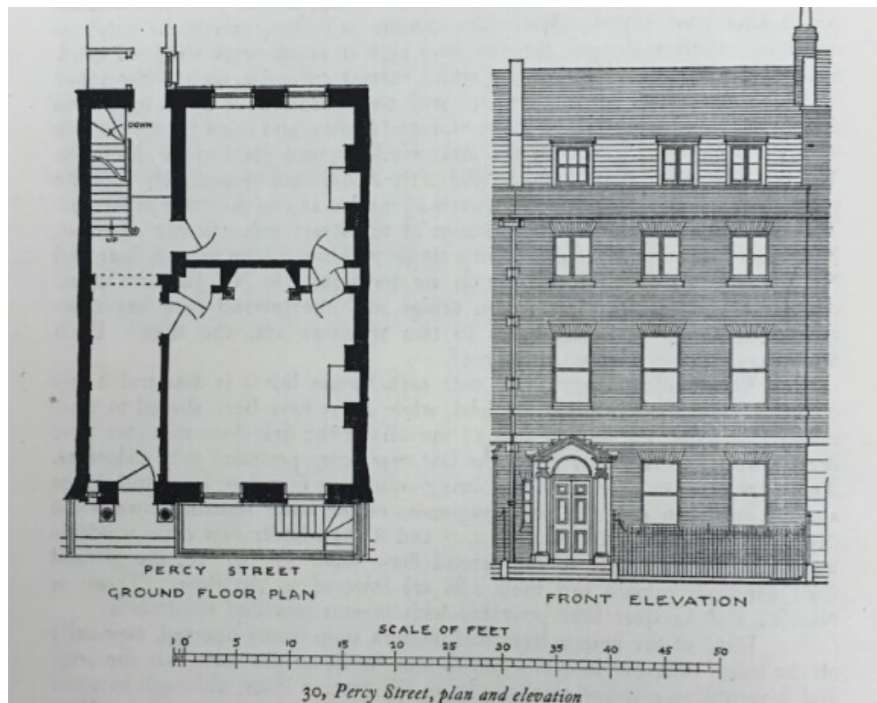


Figure 2: Typical arrangement of houses on Percy Street prior to bomb damage and alteration



Figure 3: Existing shop front in 1984 fully glazed with a single stall riser



Plate 3: 1978 Photograph of No.14 with modern shop front of No.15 to the left accords with the as existing plan from 1984

HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

15 Percy Street (listed grade II)

27. This terraced house has group value as a late 18th century town house in traditional stock brick. It has associative and illustrative historic interest as evidenced by its former inhabitants, its surviving external envelope and role in the historic street scene.
28. Architectural interest is derived largely from its brick and tile form with a regular Georgian fenestration. The ground floor of the building has been altered far beyond its original form and throughout the life of the building, eroding its special interest. The rear elevation and ground floor extension are of lesser interest than the front elevation.
29. There are no internal features of historical or architectural interest at either ground or basement floor level with the exception of the survival of brick arched vaults to the rear area of the basement. Successive modern shop fits outs and shop fronts, as well as bomb damage, have removed much of the historic fabric or features within the building. The existing timber staircase between ground and floor is not original and not of interest.
30. There is no specific archaeological or artistic interest associated with this listed building. The building contributes to the character and appearance of the conservation area and the setting of the other listed buildings in the terrace.

Charlotte Street Conservation Area

31. The Charlotte Street Conservation Area was designated in 1974 and extended on a number of occasions, most recently in 1999. The conservation area appraisal document published by LB Camden in 2008 provides information on the special interest of the area. Historically the area was developed in a relatively short space of time (1750-1770), providing a tight urban grain of three and four storey houses.
32. Percy Street is identified as being occupied by a good terrace of historic town houses, many of which are listed but No.15 is not specifically mentioned or referred to, most likely because it does not retain the kind of features at ground floor that provide character to the street scene such as door cases, front railings and lightwells.
33. The area has historical and architectural interest derived from the form of the terraced streets with good examples of Georgian architecture, albeit highly altered at ground floor level.
34. The application site does not fall within any specific identified views of importance within the conservation area.

PROPOSED WORKS

Existing Condition

35. The existing shop front is a timber framed shop front with a stall riser and timber mullions and transoms dividing the glazed area above. Integral to the shopfront is the door into the retail unit, whereas in the 1980s the entire opening was occupied by a single glazed window and stall riser. The shop is in a relatively poor condition and is in need of refreshing, which includes the existing black tiles that have been inserted at some point in the past over the original front lightwell. The existing shop front is not of special interest.
36. Internally the ground floor is a deep retail unit with a single 1940s/50s lantern light providing natural light into the rear part of the unit. This is in need of repair. The floor is a mixture of floorboards and some areas of screed and in need of some patch repair. Services have been surface mounted in most cases with a riser location toward the back of the space behind the staircase. The staircase is not original and in need of repairing and repainting, it is timber and modern. At basement floor there are no features and the concrete floor occupies the entire area. The vaulted spaces to the rear are painted brick whereas the walls are plastered, with what appears to be modern plaster. These internal areas have no elements of special interest.
37. Photographs of the application site are included within the Design and Access Statement.

Proposed Works and Effects

38. A new retailer wishes to move into the unit and install a new shop front and carry out works to the interior to allow its use as a retail unit. The proposed works, as detailed on the drawings are listed below with an assessment of the effect of the works on special interest, proportionate to the significance of the spaces and the form of the works.

Basement Floor

1. *New wc comprising new lightweight partition and finishes throughout and new sanitary ware connecting into existing service points;*

No effect on special interest—no loss of historic fabric or plan form

2. *new lightweight partitions;*

No effect on special interest—no loss of historic fabric or disturbance of existing plan form. The partitions are reversible in their entirety and will not affect the long term use or character of the basement space.

3. *new free-standing counter and sink unit;*

No effect on special interest—free standing and reversible

4. *existing finishes to walls and ceilings made good ready for redecoration;*

Beneficial effect on interiors through repair

5. *local repairs and levelling screed to retained concrete floor throughout;*

No effect on special interest—the floor has already been changed and is a concrete slab

6. *existing retained timber staircase to be refurbished;*

No effect apart from refurbishment

7. *demountable storage racking system shown dashed with 4 no. low profile tracks mechanically secured through existing slab; and*

Reversible works that will not harm special interest

8. *existing service riser duct retained for re-use.*

Re-use will ensure minimal intervention into fabric.

Ground Floor Works

1. *New external stained timber decking similar in scale to existing adjoining property as annotated on drawing, reversible;*

This will improve the appearance of the streetscene, the setting of the listed building and the wider conservation area. The timber decking will not result in any loss of fabric and will provide a natural, subtle step to the frontage of the property

2. *new concrete infill in frame to existing opening;*

This existing opening is not historic and serves no purpose. It has been inserted off centre and offers nothing to the streetscene. By filling it in access to the proposed central door can be implemented and a new covering for level access into the shop can be provided.

3. *new shopfront as shown on elevation drawing with flush access;*

The proposed shop front has been revised from that which was previously submitted to provide a stall riser along the bottom of the two side windows, introducing a solid element as encouraged by the Supplementary Planning Guidance (CPG 1). This provides a traditional breaking up of the shop front and prevents damage to it at low level.

An entrance centrally placed is proposed in line with Nos. 16-19 Percy Street and No.13 Percy Street. In a similar vein to No.19 it is proposed to have doors with full height glazing rather than a stall riser, this is because it is proposed to have them sliding to the side, rather than opening into the space or out onto the street, making it easier for customers to see into the shop and giving a subtly contemporary feel to suit the brand occupying the shop. This will not result in harm to the special interest of the listed building, which is derived from the fabric or the upper floors. The shop front is contemporary already and is read as part of a group of town houses that have undergone change but still retain the essential character and urban grain of the area.

There will be no change to the proportions of the fascia, the entablature, the columns or plinth of the shop front (which is not original but traditional) and the timber stall riser will accord with the other properties on the street and a traditional shop front.

The proposed shop front is considered to preserve the special interest of the listed building and the character of the wider area by providing a clean, simple, timber framed shop front with traditional stall riser and central entrance, the presence of central sliding doors is not assessed as detracting from the character of the building or the surrounding street scene because the shop front is clearly a modern addition and is legible as such, the sliding doors will not draw the eye and will make no perceivable difference to an experience of the historic environment.

4. *making good and patch repairs to existing ceiling and beam finishes, to match existing, prepared for redecoration;*

This will enhance the fabric of the building and ensure its long term maintenance

5. *making good and patch repairs to existing floor finishes throughout, to match existing*

These works will not entail the removal of historic fabric and are sensitive to the building

6. *new lightweight partition and door to rear of retail unit;*

This will have no effect on special interest, plan form or historic fabric

7. *existing retained timber staircase to be refurbished;*

No effect on special interest

8. *new lightweight partition;*

This is to be appropriately positioned on the existing line of a previous partition and will have no effect on plan form.

9. *existing service riser retained for re-use; and*

This will involve minimal intervention and no disturb historic fabric.

10. *existing glazed lantern over, retained and repaired. Non-original cracked or obscured glass to be replaced with new clear glass.*

This is repair and will have no effect on special interest.

Proposed Signage

39. It is proposed to provide new lettering to the fascia spelling 'Presented By'. The signage will be limited in size and painted to blend with the shop front fascia, backlit by a discreet LED lighting that will provide a subtle silhouette to the lettering. The letters will be formed of rigid external grade board and fixed with concealed bolts. A black shop front and signage will appear similar to No.19 and No.20 Percy Street, which both have black painted shop fronts. The propose signage is considered to be discreet, subtle and appropriate for this building.

CONCLUSIONS

40. This is a listed building with both historic and architectural interest, mostly evidenced by its upper floors and external envelope. It has been altered to a significance degree at ground and basement level to accommodate changing retail units and has no features of historic interest at these levels.

41. The proposed works will result in a more attractive arrangement of shop front than is existing, with a centrally placed door and stall riser. The surround of the shop, including the fascia and columns and plinth will be retained and painted.

42. Both the listed terrace and the wider conservation area would not be harmed by the proposed works, which are relatively minor and sensitive to their location. The changes will be discreet and will not jar with the surrounding shop fronts.