

**2016/6272/P**

The Bloomsbury Conservation Area Advisory Committee (BCAAC) objects to the proposal to infill the basement lightwells at no 4-5 Bernard Street. This is a key historic street that includes many listed buildings.

Although the buildings at 4-5 Bernard Street are not listed, they are considered to be positive contributors to the Bloomsbury Conservation Area. [See Bloomsbury Conservation Area Appraisal, adopted 2011, page 145 referring to 3-5 Bernard Street]. The letter sent from Rolfe Judd Planning in support of this application states (page 3) that the Bloomsbury CA appraisal does not acknowledge 4 or 5 Bernard Street as being positive contributors. This is incorrect.

The Bloomsbury Conservation Area Appraisal also states:

5.40 The railings and basements along the majority of frontages are an important facet of the character of the area. The Council will resist the loss of original railings and infilling of basement lightwells where this forms part of the area's character.

The photo that was included in the Members Briefing for the planning application 2016/2605/P (5 Bernard Street) clearly shows the terrace beyond Russell Square station with its lightwells and railings.

**View of the listed terraces with the lightwells**



The previous application for no 5 Bernard Street (2016/2605/P) for replacement of existing shopfront and awning to restaurant (Class A3), and display of an externally illuminated fascia and projecting sign was granted but the Members Briefing document clearly states:

- 2.1 The scheme has been revised during the course of the application to address objections received, as follows:
- (i) Retention of the lightwell
  - (ii) Removal of the proposed external seating area/terrace from the proposal
  - (iii) Removal of the transom bars from the glazing frontage, de-cluttering the original shopfront design.
  - (iv) Alterations to the design of the access steps into the restaurant from external to internal floors

It is completely inconsistent with Camden's previous intervention in the planning application for no 5 Bernard Street to now consider the removal of the lightwell in the identical building (and also no 4) – simply because it is a separate application, a few months later.

It would be more consistent with Camden's policy towards heritage that the applicant is forced to replace the modern railings with those that are in-keeping with the Conservation Area.

Bloomsbury CAAC asks the Council to refuse planning permission for the infilling of the basements at no 4-5 Bernard Street, in accordance with Camden's Core Strategy policy CS14 - Promoting high quality places and conserving our heritage; and Development Policy DP25 – Conserving Camden's Heritage.

Kind regards

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