

Our Ref: 16361/MS/JD
Your Ref: PP-05729812
Email: mshearman@firstplan.co.uk
Date: 09 January 2017

London Borough of Camden
2nd Floor, 5 Pancras Square
c/o Town Hall, Judd Street
London
WC1H 9JE

Dear Sir/Madam,

**PLANNING AND ADVERTISEMENT APPLICATIONS FOR ALTERATIONS TO EXISTING
SHOPFRONT AND INSTALLATION OF NEW SIGNAGE
52 LAMB'S CONDUIT STREET, LONDON, WC1N 3LL**

We have been instructed by our client, La Fromagerie, to submit the above applications in relation to the existing retail premises at 52 Lamb's Conduit Street, London, WC1N 3LL.

The applications have been submitted online via the Planning Portal (ref: PP-05729812). They are comprised of the following information which has been attached:

- Completed Planning and Advertisement Consent Forms and Certificates;
- CIL Forms;
- Site Location Plan;
- Block Plan;
- Existing Layout Plan – (ref: EA213-01A);
- Existing Elevations – (ref: EA213-02);
- Proposed Layout Plan – ref: 034-100B); and
- Proposed Elevations – (ref: 034-210).

The requisite planning fee of £305 has been paid online via the Planning Portal. The remainder of this letter sets out our supporting statement with regard to the proposed scheme.

Site Description

The application site comprises the ground floor unit at 52 Lamb's Conduit Street, an end of terrace period property situated on the corner of Rugby Street. The unit was formerly occupied by the Darkroom retail store, but has been largely vacant since they ceased trading from the premises. Residential units occupy the upper floors of the building.

These applications relate exclusively to the shopfront. The existing shopfront currently consists of two main window bays along the Lamb's Conduit Street Elevation, with stall riser below and the entrance located on the corner of Lamb's Conduit Street and Rugby Street. The current arrangement was installed pursuant to a 2009 planning consent, and includes a very large fascia which is not considered to contribute positively to the shopfront.

The site is located within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area and neighbourhood centre which is characterised by its tight urban grain and its retail/commercial character at street level, with residential/office uses above. The site is also designated as an Archaeological Priority Area.

Planning History

The application site has been subject to a number of planning proposals related mainly to the rationalising of the residential floor space and extensions at roof level. The only history of relevance to the application proposals dates from 2009, when the current shopfront was permitted under application ref: "2009/3498/P".

Application Proposals

This application seeks the relevant consents to allow for modest alterations to the existing shopfront and the associated installation of new signage in order to refresh, upgrade and enhance the appearance of the building, and to facilitate our client's branding requirements in order to enable them to begin trading from the premises. A key objective of the proposed works is to provide traditional and visually pleasing composition for the shopfront.

External Alterations

The main alterations to the facade will be to the Lamb's Conduit Street elevation, where the existing oversized fascia will be reduced to a more appropriate, proportionate size. The existing windows will be reconfigured in a three-bay format with transom lights above these to provide a more traditional, proportionate appearance for the unit. The proposals also include the reintroduction of awnings to the Lamb's Conduit Street elevation and the introduction of soft illumination to the shopfront including two wall mounted strip lights fixed to the central and left hand side pilaster of the shopfront and a new bespoke traditional lantern which will be centrally fixed over the main entrance. The remainder of the works are redecoration to ensure a consistent and traditional aesthetic.

Signage

The application also proposes a replacement signage strategy which includes one new fascia sign and one projecting sign, as follows:

- **Sign A:** one "La Fromagerie" outline metal relief lettering (1905m x 215mm) which will be externally illuminated by a single picture light. The sign will be centrally located on at fascia level, along the main elevation on Lamb's Conduit Street; and
- **Sign B:** one non-illuminated antique projecting sign to be located on the Rugby Street elevation.

Planning Policy

The statutory development plan for Camden comprises the Camden Core Strategy 2010-2015, Camden Development Policies 2010-2015 together with national policy and the London Plan (2011 with consolidated amendments 2015). The draft Camden Local Plan 2016 is also considered.

The Council's Proposals Map designates the site as falling within Bloomsbury Conservation area and Town Centre.

Camden Core Strategy 2010-2015

Policy CS14 requires development of the highest standard of design that respects local context and character, preserves and enhances heritage assets, promotes high quality landscaping and works to streets and public spaces and seeks the highest standards of access in all buildings and protecting important local views.

Policy CS17 requires development to demonstrate that they have incorporated design principles which contribute to community safety and security.

Camden Development Policies 2010-2015

Policy DP22 states that schemes must demonstrate how sustainable development principles have been incorporated into the design.

Policy DP24 relates to securing high quality design and expects development to consider the following matters:

- “a) character, setting, context and the form and scale of neighbouring buildings;*
- b) the character and proportions of the existing building, where alterations and extensions are proposed;*
- c) the quality of materials to be used;*
- d) the provision of visually interesting frontages at street level;*
- ...
- i) accessibility.”*

Policy DP25 seeks to preserve and conserve the character and appearance of Camden’s heritage assets, including conservation areas.

Policy DP26 states that the Council will protect the quality of life of occupiers and neighbours by only granting permission for development that does not cause harm to amenity.

Policy DP29 expects that all buildings meet the highest practicable standards of access and inclusion.

Policy DP30 expects a high standard of design in new and altered shopfronts. When considering such proposals, the Council will consider:

- “a) the design of the shopfront or feature;*
- b) the existing character, architectural and historic merit and design of the building and its shopfront;*
- c) the relationship between the shopfront and the upper floors of the building and surrounding properties, including the relationship between the shopfront and any forecourt or lightwell;*
- d) the general characteristics of shopfronts in the area; and*
- e) community safety and the contribution made by shopfronts to natural surveillance.”*

Camden Planning Guidance 1 Design

Section 2 sets out that the Council is committed to excellence in design and schemes should consider the context of a development and its surrounding area, the design of the building itself and the materials used.

Section 3 relates to heritage assets and sets out that development in conservation areas will only be permitted where it preserves and enhances the character and appearance of the conservation area.

Section 7 relates to shopfronts and states that well designed shopfronts increase the attractiveness of a building and the local area. New shopfronts should be designed as part of the whole building and should sensitively relate to the scale, proportions and architectural style of the building and surrounding facades.

Materials should be chosen for their durability and appropriateness to their location. Traditional materials such as timber, stone and render are the most appropriate for new shopfronts, with more contemporary materials appropriate in some circumstances.

Main fascias should also be of a suitable size and proportion in relation to the building and should sit between cornice and shopfront itself. Deep box fascias which project beyond the shopfront frame should be avoided. Lettering on fascia signs should be proportionate to the scale of the shopfront.

Section 8 relates to advertisements and signs and sets out that the most satisfactory advertisements are those which take into account the character and design of the property, the appearance of the surroundings and the external fabric of the building. Advertisements will not be considered acceptable where they impact upon public safety, such as being hazardous to vehicular or pedestrian traffic.

In order to reduce crime, proposals should incorporate good urban design principles, including active frontages to buildings.

Camden Planning Guidance 5 Town Centres, Retail and Employment

The document shows that the site is located within the core frontage of the Kentish Town. These frontages are noted for their varied character and range of uses.

Camden Planning Guidance 6 Amenity

The Council expects all development including alterations to or refurbishment of existing buildings where practical and reasonable, to be designed to be accessible and useable by all to promote equality of opportunity.

The document states that artificial lighting should not have a detrimental impact on the quality of life of neighbouring residents.

Planning and Heritage Assessment

The proposals put forward by these applications are aimed at returning the existing shopfront to a more traditional aesthetic which will complement and enhance the conservation area and enable the applicant to begin their fit out and start trading from the premises. The key planning considerations in respect of this application relate to the impact the proposed external alterations to the shopfront will have on the character and appearance of the designated conservation area and host building, on the amenities of the immediate surroundings, and the impact the replacement signage will have on amenity and highways safety.

External Alterations

Bloomsbury is noted for its formally planned arrangement of streets and the contrasting leafy squares. The quintessential character of the Conservation Area derives from the grid of streets enclosed by mainly three and four storey development which has a distinctly urban character of broad streets interspersed by formal squares which provide landscape dominated focal points. The predominant architectural styles of the Conservation Area are classically derived, regardless of period or building type. Lamb's Conduit Street is

recognised in the area as a Mixed Use Street which comprises a large number of 18th and early 19th century brick townhouses, three to four storeys in height, often with shops at ground-floor level. The street has historically been popular for its active frontages and mix of tenures and boutique businesses at ground floor level.

The relevant policies cited earlier and the Bloomsbury Conservation Area Appraisal, acknowledge that a well-designed shopfront adds greatly to the attractiveness of a shopping area. The proposal will result in an enhancement of the appearance and character of the application building and the surrounding area. The proposals put forward in this application compliment the townscape and do not undermine the attractive retail character. There are no implications to the long views along, into and out of Lamb's Conduit Street and the wider conservation area from the proposals.

Indeed, the application proposes the reinstatement of a more traditional shopfront which was altered by the previous tenants, Darkroom, in their original fit out works carried out under application 2009/3498/P. Reducing the fascia and introducing transom lights will help improve light flow into the unit whilst also creating a more active shopfront at this prominent location. The proposed traditional awning will be fitted below the fascia and will be dark grey to match the aesthetic of the remaining shopfront. The use of awnings is established along Lamb's Conduit Street, and it is considered that this is entirely appropriate in this context.

Additional illumination is also proposed via the two strip lights fixed to the shopfront pilasters and a new lantern fixed above the entrance. The lights would only be in use when the shop is open for staff and customers, and will provide a moderate level of illumination. Furthermore, the commercial character of the surrounding area, which is dominated by existing shopfronts including some level of illumination, will ensure that the impact of the lighting on the wider streetscene is negligible. The illumination of these elements will be subtle and will not harm the amenities of the residential units above the store or adjacent to the site.

The overall design is more sympathetic to the original architectural style of the host building and the materials that will be used will remain consistent with the existing character.

The remaining works proposed to the shop front are merely refurbishments to the existing and represent an investment from our client to restore the shopfront to a more uniform and traditional aesthetic to compliment the whole façade and will be more encompassing with the wider conservation area. As such the proposals are in line with council's policies on design, heritage and amenity.

Signage

The proposed signage is simple in design and is consistent with other examples of signage along Lamb's Conduit Street. The lettering fits within the reduced fascia comfortably and the soft illumination from the picture light will not harm any sensitive receptors in either the residential units above the shop or the highway.

The antique projecting signage is an attractive option that sits well within the conservation area in terms of aesthetic and the subtle illumination from the picture lights will be pointed directly at the sign. There will be no harm to any neighbouring properties in terms of light pollution and it will not impact on highway safety.

Conclusions

In conclusion, we consider the proposals put forward in this application are entirely appropriate to the significance of the site within Bloomsbury Conservation Area and represent a significant investment on the part of our client, La Fromagerie. Indeed, the proposals are in compliance with the Council's policies and guidance on design, amenity, advertisement and conservation area management.

I therefore trust that you have sufficient information in order to validate and approve the applications, however, should you have any queries then please do not hesitate to contact me. Otherwise, I look forward to discussing the application proposals with you in due course.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'firstplan', written in black ink.

MARK SHEARMAN
Director

Enc.