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# Planning, Design and Access Statement

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Melia White House,  
Albany Street, Regents Park,  
NW1 3UP



# Planning, Design and Access Statement

Melia White House, Albany Street, NW1 3UT

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## Contents

1.	Introduction	3
2.	Site and Surroundings	4
3.	Planning History	7
4.	Proposals	10
5.	Planning Policy Framework	12
6.	Planning Considerations	13
7.	Conclusions	17

## 1. Introduction

1.1 This statement has been prepared in support of a planning application for:

*The replacement of all external windows from a mixture of Crittall and uPVC with steel windows, with matching fenestration pattern.*

1.2 This statement follows pre application advice (Reference no. 2016/5541/PRE), with amendments and additional information gathered accordingly. This statement also follows several site visits, a review of the relevant Development Plan and National Planning Policy Framework policies and guidance, and a review of the sites planning history.

1.3 This statement provides background information on the site and an assessment of the proposals in relation to planning policy and other material considerations, and is set out under the following sections:

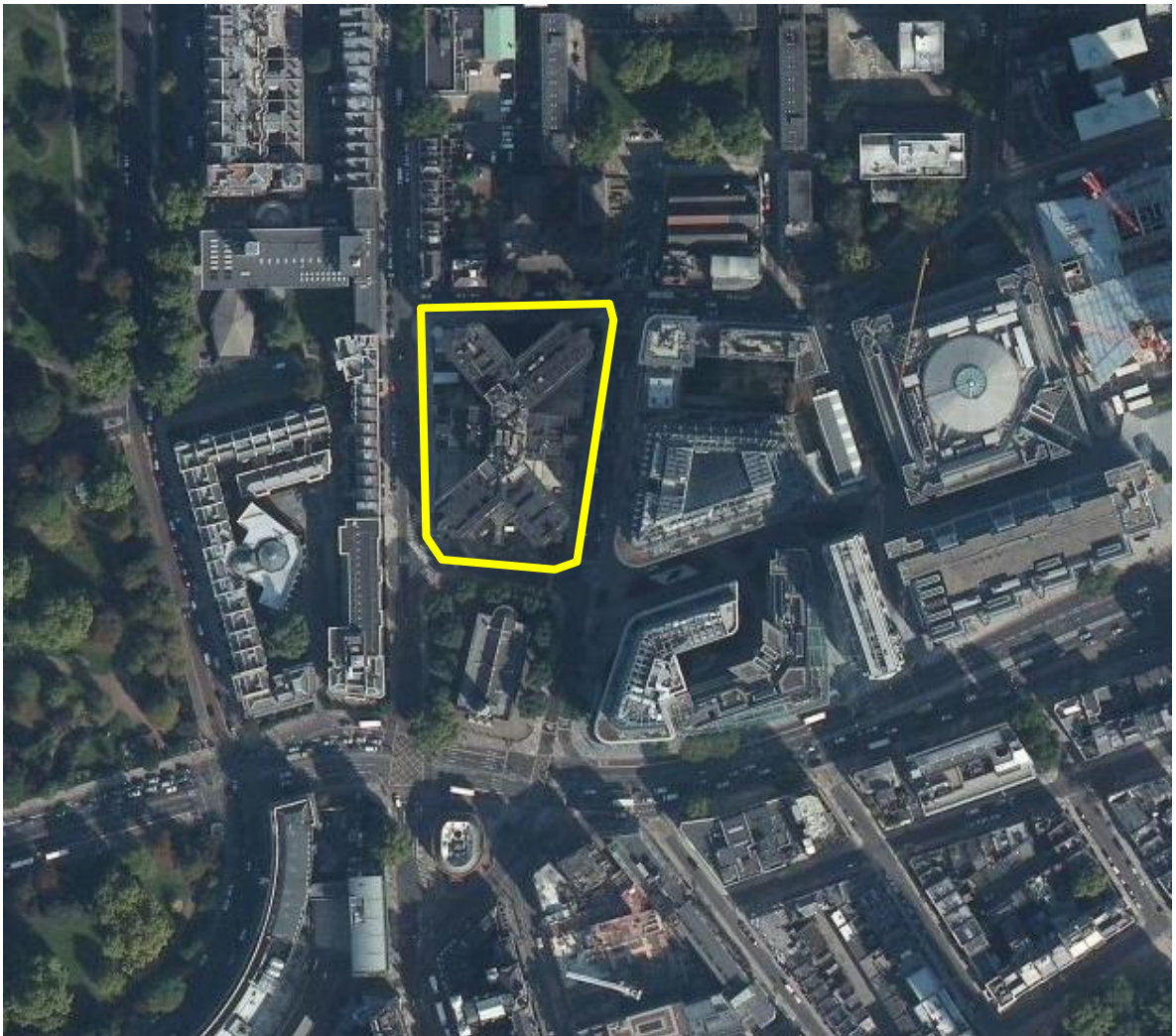
- **Section 2** outlines the site and its context within the surrounding area;
- **Section 3** provides an overview of the planning history;
- **Section 4** reviews the proposals in more detail;
- **Section 5** sets out the relevant policy framework;
- **Section 6** outlines the main planning considerations;
- **Section 7** draws the conclusions.

1.4 This statement should be read in conjunction with the following documents:

- Heritage Statement prepared by Donald Insall;
- Window schedule and elevations;
- Existing and proposed drawing sections;
- Condition sample survey.

## 2. Site and Surroundings

- 2.1 The site is located on the east side of Albany Street, bounded by Longford Street to the north, Osnaburgh Terrace to the south and Osnaburgh Street to the east. The main entrance fronts onto Osnaburgh Terrace. It is a short distance from Euston Road and Great Portland Street Underground, with a PTAL rating of 6b.



*Site Location Aerial View (Bing Maps)*

- 2.2 The building is a Grade II listed, 9 storey structure arranged in a star shape. The building was originally constructed in 1936 as serviced flats but is currently used as a hotel, known as The Melia White House Hotel. The elevations are clad in pale cream faience tiles which are slightly darker to the ground floor and to the banding at each floor. The windows are currently a mixture of Crittall and



# Planning, Design and Access Statement

Melia White House, Albany Street, NW1 3UT



uPVC in an art-deco style.



*Main entrance on Osnaburgh Terrace, where all the original windows have been replaced.*

2.3 The surrounding area is comprised of 4-storey period townhouses along Albany Street, and mixed-use office developments of various ages, designs and scales to the East. Furthermore, the site is located near Regents Park and directly behind 1 Marylebone, a Grade I Listed church. The site is not within a conservation area, however it sits adjacent to the Regents Park Conservation Area. The site has no other policy designations

2.4 The property is Grade II Listed. The full listing description is set out below:

*Former serviced flats, now a hotel. 1936. By Robert Atkinson. Steel frame clad in pale cream faience tiles, slightly darker to ground floor and bands. Star-shaped plan providing optimum light and ventilation without light-wells. 9 storeys. Diagonal blocks have chamfered angles and central triangular bays which extend above the roof line. 3-light Crittal windows have continuous sill bands and meet at angles of triangular bays. Original steel windows remain in situ to the north-east and central west ranges;*

*all other windows have been replaced with UPVC windows of a similar design in c.1992. Main entrance to Osnaburgh Terrace altered but subsidiary entrance on Albany Street with good moulded doorcase with figurative frieze, approached by steps with original cast-iron handrail. Flat roof with projecting eaves. INTERIOR: not inspected. Spencer-Longhurst P ( ed.): Robert Atkinson 1883-1952:Architectural Association: 1989-; 36-37). Bibliography 8011 Robert Atkinson 1883-1952 (Paul Spencer Longhurst), 1989, Page (s) 36,37*

- 2.5 As set out in the listing description, a number of the windows have been replaced with unsympathetic uPVC windows. The remaining Crittall windows are in very poor condition and need to be replaced.

## 3. Planning History

3.1 The relevant planning history for the site is set out below:

Address	Reference	Description	Decision	Date
Melia White House Albany Street London NW1 3UT	2011/4612/P & 2011/4621/L	Alterations including the replacement of the existing external doors to public access and the addition of a new canopy structure on Osnaburgh Street elevation to existing hotel (Use Class C1).	Granted	20-01-2012
Melia White House Albany Street London NW1 3UT	2011/2625/A	Display of 1x non-illuminated banner attached to Albany Street frontage	Refused	07-07-2011
Melia White House Hotel Albany Street London NW1 3UT	2008/2887/P & 2008/3293/L	Installation of safety railings at roof level	Granted	15-09-2008
Melia White House Albany Street London NW1 3UT	2006/4058/L	Internal alterations at basement level and installation of external electrical transformer and associated equipment and enclosures at ground floor level on Osnaburgh frontage, and relocation of blue plaque at the hotel (Class C1).	Granted	21-09-2006
Melia White House Hotel Albany Street London NW1 3UT	2006/4057/P	Installation of external electrical transformer and associated equipment and enclosures at ground floor level on Osnaburgh frontage, and relocation of blue plaque at hotel (Use Class C1)	Granted	15/11/2006
Melia White House Hotel Albany Street London NW1 3UT	LSX0204485	Internal alterations at basement area to refurbish an existing bar area into a fitness centre. Works include insertion of partitions, reconfiguration of a staircase and insertion of air conditioning and other related services, as shown on drawing numbers: Location site plan:1250, unnumbered photograph of interior prior to refurbishment, TP B01 rev A, BR02, and 24667.	Granted	13/09/2002

3.2 Pre application advice (Reference No. 2016/5541/PRE) was sought for the proposal. In summary, the Council found that:

- The remaining Crittall windows are in disrepair;
- The replacement of the uPVC windows would be an enhancement as they are sympathetic to the age, construction and character of the building;
- There are concerns about the loss of original fabric;

The response to advice to the requirements of a full application are set out below and subsequently discussed in further detail:

- Assessment of condition of existing windows:  
*As subsequently discussed, the existing windows are in disrepair with advanced rust, windows that do not close, malfunctioning handles etc. The level of corrosion has affected the core of the frame and so the windows must be replaced. Please refer to the Condition Sample Survey for further detail.*
- Whether there is an opportunity for existing windows to be repaired:  
*There is no opportunity for the Crittall windows to be repaired due to the level of corrosion and rust attacking the core of the frame.*
- The significance of the loss of original fabric on the heritage asset:  
*As set out in the supporting Heritage Statement, the significance of the windows are their uniformity not their fabric, therefore the replacement to uniform steel represents a significant benefit to the Heritage Asset.*
- Details of any enhancements:  
*As set out in this report, the enhancements can be summarised as the reinstatement of a uniform appearance through the replacement of poorly performing, irreparable windows. The replacement will better reveal the significance of the Heritage Asset as set out in the supporting Heritage Statement, and also improve the buildings thermal properties, co2 emissions and acoustics to secure the sites optimal viable use in accordance with the NPPF.*
- Confirmation of the phases of the window replacement.  
*The current programme is to do one wing at a time to enable the continued function of*



# Planning, Design and Access Statement

Melia White House, Albany Street, NW1 3UT

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*Melia White Hotel. The works will be commenced in June 2017 and completed in March 2018.*

- 3.3 In response to the advice, Donald Insall have prepared a Historic Building report to assess the building, this has been submitted in support of this application.

## 4. Proposals

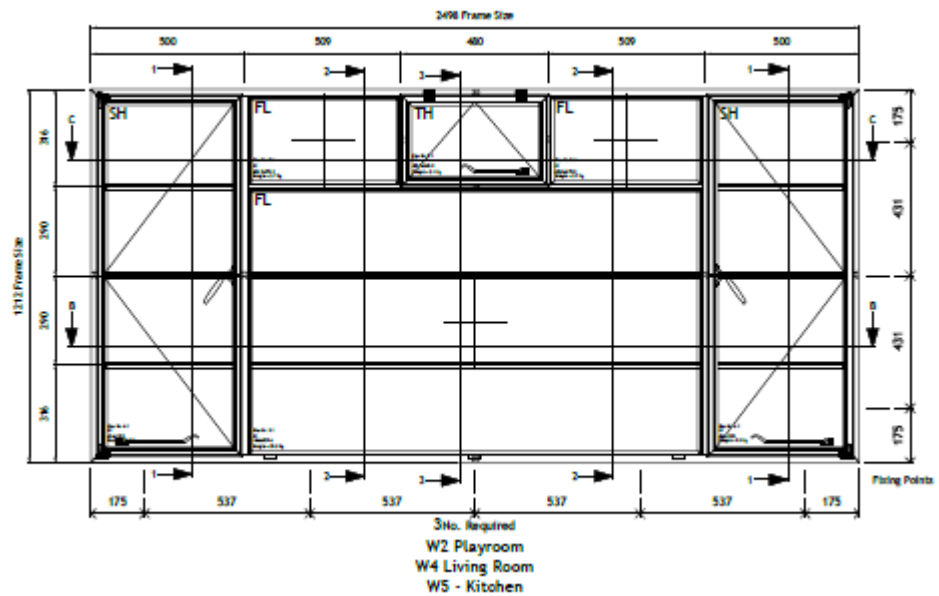
- 4.1 It is proposed to replace all of the external windows from a mixture of Crittall and uPVC to steel with a matching fenestration pattern.
- 4.2 A recent window audit of the site revealed that from the 1010 windows identified on the facades, 52.1% were uPVC and 47.9% were original. The majority of the original windows were on the north eastern and western facades. Please refer to the elevations submitted alongside this application for the exact detail of the window location. Generally, the original Crittall windows were in poor condition both visually and functionally. For example, visually the windows are rusty, paint chipped and poorly fitting, and functionally they do not shut and have advanced corrosion that is attacking the core of the frame meaning they must be replaced.
- 4.3 The proposed changes would replace all the windows with an steel frame in order to contribute to the overall buildings upkeep. The glazing pattern for all types of windows will match the existing situation. There are 8 window types across the building with some minor variations.



*Example replacement steel frame*

# Planning, Design and Access Statement

Melia White House, Albany Street, NW1 3UT



Sample drawing of a proposed window.

- 4.4 The proposed steel frames have been chosen to provide the closest match for the replacement of the windows whilst also providing a viable option for carrying out the works to the existing windows.

## 5. Planning Policy Framework

5.1 This section outlines the relevant national and local planning policies against which the proposals are considered. As the development relates to the replacement of external features, the policies listed predominately relate to historical conservation and design.

### 5.2 National Planning Policy Framework

5.3 The National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and replaced the majority of the existing Planning Policy Statements (PPSs) and Planning Policy Guidance (PPGs).

5.4 Chapter 12 of the NPPF talks extensively about the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment. In particular, Paragraph 131 details that local planning authorities should consider the desirability of enhancing heritage assets and the contribution this would have on the local area. Moreover, Paragraph 134 states that where a development would lead to less than substantial harm to a heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.

### Local and Regional Policy

5.5 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that any planning application must be determined in accordance with the development plan for the area unless any material considerations indicate otherwise.

5.6 In this case the development plan comprises;

- The Consolidated London Plan (March 2016)
- The Camden Core Strategy (November 2010)
- The Camden Development Policies (November 2010)

The following supplementary documents are also important in assessing the proposal;

- CPG 1, Camden Design SPD
- CPG 6, Camden Amenity SPD

5.7 The following section sets out the considerations of the proposed development in relation to planning policy and guidance.



## 6. Planning Considerations

6.1 Due to the nature of the works, the primary planning considerations are design and heritage, and amenity.

### **Design and Heritage**

#### Policy

6.2 The relevant policies in regard to design and heritage are:

- CS14 – seeks to ensure development uses a high quality of design that respects it's local context and preserves or enhances heritage assets.
- DP24 - seeks to secure a high quality of design to all development through the consideration of the local context, materials used, visual frontages, location, landscaping, amenity and accessibility.
- DP25 – seeks to preserve and enhance Camden's heritage in regard to conservation areas, listed buildings and archaeology.

6.3 Whilst not yet adopted, recent planning history and the Camden Council website suggest that the emerging Local Plan, which has been submitted for inspection, will be afforded limited weight where appropriate.

6.4 The relevant policies of the emerging Local Plan are D1 and D2, these policies echo the guidance provided by the above policies of the adopted Local Development Framework. Therefore, as the guidance is not considered to significantly change, the proposals should be considered against the adopted policies of the Core Strategy and Development Management Plan.

#### Loss of original fabric

6.5 The proposal seeks to replace all of the windows on the building, 47.2% of which are original fabric. As set out in the official listing, the building was listed for various reasons including its cream tile facade, star shaped plan, diagonal blocks and roofline. There is also mention of the windows and

the doors. As confirmed in the supporting heritage statement, it is not the fabric of the windows that contributes to the Listed Buildings significance, but the intended uniformity. As such, the loss of the original fabric would cause neutral harm to the heritage asset, and any potentially perceived harm would be less than substantial.

6.6 Where a proposal would cause no harm to a heritage asset, the NPPF would give a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Furthermore, Paragraph 134 of the NPPF states that where a development will lead to less than substantial harm to a heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimal viable use. This guidance is consistent with the overall aims of Camden's adopted policy documents and relevant policies outlined above.

6.7 In this case, the public benefits of the proposal are considered to significantly outweigh the harm caused by the loss of the original fabric.

6.8 Firstly, the building currently has a mix of original and non original windows, therefore there is no uniformity to the current windows which detracts from the buildings overall appearance. Furthermore, as confirmed by the Council in pre application advice, the remaining Crittall windows are in disrepair. The majority of the original windows are not repairable due to advanced corrosion attacking the entire frame. This level of metal fatigue means that they must be replaced. As such, the replacement of the windows with a sensitive, visually identical steel frame would improve the facade and better reveal the architectural significance of the heritage asset.



*Examples of windows that do not close, undermining the existing use of the building*



*Examples of the extent of rust and damage*

6.9 Furthermore, as the building is in hotel use, its purpose is to accommodate visitors and so it is a necessity that the building has functional windows that can serve this purpose. If the building has windows that do not work properly, then it undermines the purpose of the building as a high quality space for visitors. As such, the replacement of the dysfunctional Crittall windows would allow the continued use of the building as a hotel. Therefore, the proposal is in accordance with paragraph 134 by securing the buildings optimal viable use.

6.10 Visually, the proposed steel windows are sympathetic to the age, construction and character of the building and will use an identical colour, fenestration and glazing pattern. As such, they represent a necessary and beneficial improvement that will bring the site into optimum viable use. The proposal will replace dysfunctional windows beyond the point of repair and also replace uPVC windows that are not original and detract from the buildings architectural significance.

6.11 Furthermore, by increasing the glazing, the proposal will improve the thermal properties of hotel, which in turn will reduce overall carbon emissions. Furthermore, the replacement of the windows are will improve the buildings acoustics. Together, these benefits will significantly improve the buildings function to secure its optimal viable use.

## **Amenity**

6.12 Policy CS5 and DP26 seek to protect the amenity of Camden's residents. No extra windows are proposed and the changes are like for like. As such, due to the nature and location of the proposals

# Planning, Design and Access Statement

Melia White House, Albany Street, NW1 3UT

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they are not considered to have any impact on neighbouring residents in regard to privacy, daylight and outlook. This sentiment was confirmed by the Council in pre application advice.

## **Access**

- 6.13 No change to access is proposed as part of the application.



## 7. Conclusions

- 7.1 In conclusion, it is proposed to replace all external windows from a mixture of Crittall and uPVC to steel windows, with a matching fenestration pattern.
- 7.2 This application has been prepared following a review of pre application advice (Reference No. 2016/5541/PRE) , various site visits, a review of the relevant policy and planning history. It is our opinion that the proposals represent a necessary intervention in order to maintain the buildings continued use.
- 7.3 Overall, the proposal will secure the following planning benefits:
- Reinststate a uniform appearance that will better reveal the significance of the heritage asset;
  - Replace poorly performing windows that are in disrepair, to secure the optimum viable use of the site;
  - Replace low quality, unattractive uPVC windows that detract from the buildings character;
  - Increase glazing to improve thermal properties to reduce Co2 emissions;
  - Improve Acoustics
- 7.4 When considered alongside the fact that the replacement of the original Crittall windows will not harm the Grade II Listed building, and at most will cause less than substantial harm, then the proposals are in accordance with paragraph 134 of the NPPF and CS14, DP24 and DP25 of the Camden Development Plan.
- 7.5 As such, we are hopeful that the Officers are minded to approve this application and ensure the buildings continued success as a hotel.