



**TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 (AS AMENDED)  
PLANNING AND COMPULSORY PURCHASE  
ACT 2004**

**HERITAGE STATEMENT**

**RE: INTERNAL ALTERATIONS FOR THE CHANGE OF USE FROM A2  
(PROFESSIONAL SERVICES) TO MIXED USE A1 (RETAIL) AND D2  
(GYM)**

**UNIT 52, BRUNSICK SHOPPING CENTRE, LONDON, WC1N 1BS**

**On behalf of:  
THE FITNESS SPACE UK LTD.**

Date: August 2017

Ref: AP/P/F-028

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This statement has been prepared by Plan-A Planning and Development Ltd on behalf of the applicant in support of Planning and Listed Building applications for proposed internal alterations Unit 52, Brunswick Shopping Centre needed to convert the unit from A2 (professional services) to mixed use A1 (retail) and D2 (gym).

## 2. LIST DESCRIPTION

- 2.1 The statutory list description associated with The Brunswick Centre is as follows:-

Details

TQ 3082SW BRUNSWICK SQUARE 798-1/95/10155 (West side) 14-SEP-00 1-187a  
O'Donnell Court, 1-212a Foundling Court, Renoir Cinema, shops (The Brunswick Centre), basement car park, and attached ramps, steps and studios

GV II

Two linked blocks of 560 flats, incorporating rows of shops at raised ground level over basement car -parking on two levels, with attached workshops, ramps and steps. 1967-72 by Patrick Hodgkinson for Marchmont Properties and LB Camden, completed by L Brian Ingram and T P Bennett and Partners. The first scheme prepared 1960-3 with Sir Leslie Martin, subsequent scheme developed 1963-5 by Hodgkinson, and modified 1966-8, assisted by F D A Levitt, A Richardson, D Campbell and P Myers. Engineers McAlpine Design Group, and Robert McAlpine and Sons were the builders. Reinforced concrete, some now painted as was always intended, glazed roofs to part of each flat, otherwise roofs are flat. Flat roofs over shops form terraces serving the flats, on which are placed small 'professional studios'.

Complex megastructure of two 'A-framed' blocks, O'Donnell Court and Foundling Court, linked by a raised podium containing shops and a cinema and set over a basement car park on two levels. The outer or perimeter range of five storeys, the inner or main range of eight storeys. Most of the flats on the upper floors have one or two bedrooms, with some studios at the ends, all with glazed living room extending on to balcony, which form a stepped profile down the side of the building. One larger flat and further small flats on the lower floors of the perimeter blocks. The raised ground floor is occupied by a shopping mall, whose projecting form forms two terraces above, linked by a bridge in the early 1990s when steps from the mall were blocked. The professional chambers, intended for functions such as doctor's surgeries, are now leased as offices and workshops. Cinema facing Brunswick Square descends two levels into basement; was originally one screen, but has been subsequently simply subdivided. Basement on two levels has car parking.

The elevations are determined by the plan, with metal windows, and metal balustrading to concrete balconies. Mullions to concealed basement ventilation. Regularly spaced lift-shafts, staircases and ventilator towers reminiscent of Antonio

Sant'Elia's scheme of 1914 for Milan Railway Station; there are comparisons too in the formal entrance to the shopping mall opposite Brunswick Square, where the framework of the structure is left open save for the cinema, largely glazed and with glazed doors, sentinel at its entrance. The flats are now entered via modern security doors and the internal 'A'-frame structure is exposed and makes an extremely powerful composition along the landings serving the flats. The internal finishes of the flats, shops and cinema have been inspected, and are not of special interest.

The Brunswick Centre is the pioneering example of a megastructure in England: of a scheme which combines several functions of equal importance within a single framework. It is also the pioneering example of low-rise, high-density housing, a field in which Britain was extremely influential on this scale. The scheme grew out of a theoretical project by Hodgkinson with Sir Leslie Martin for West Kentish Town (St Pancras MB), and his own student work of 1953. This, however, was for a mat of largely four-storied maisonettes using a cross-over or scissor plan, while in section the Brunswick Centre more closely resembled Harvey Court, designed for Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge, in 1957, a design largely developed by Hodgkinson working with Martin and Colin St John Wilson. Brunswick developed the concept of the stepped section on a large scale and for a range of facilities, whose formality was pioneering. It forms an interesting group of reference with Sir Denys Lasdun and Partners' University of East Anglia (designed 1962-3) and Darbourne and Darke's Lillington Gardens, Westminster (designed 1961). More directly, the housing part of the scheme was taken over in 1965 by LB Camden, and Hodgkinson liaised with the Chief Architect, S A G Cook. His influence on the young architects working for Cook was profound, and can be seen in schemes by Neave Brown, Benson and Forsyth and others built across the borough in the 1970s - and which in their turn were celebrated and imitated on a smaller scale elsewhere. The most celebrated of these schemes is Alexandra Road by Neave Brown, of 1972-8 and listed grade II\*, which repeats the use of concrete and the stepped building profile, but achieves greater formality by concentrating solely on the provision of housing, set in a crescent.

Sources Architectural Review, October 1972, pp.194-218 LB Camden, Planning Department File 217, nineteen volumes Rayner Banham, Megastructure, London, Architectural Press, 1976 RIBA Biography File, Patrick Hodgkinson

### **3. SETTING, BACKGROUND AND ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

#### **Setting and Background**

- 3.1 The Brunswick Centre is a residential and shopping centre in Bloomsbury, located between Brunswick Square to the east and Russel Square to the south west. The Brunswick Centre comprises two linked blocks of 560 flats, a shopping centre with rows of shops at raised ground floor level over a car parking basement. The development also incorporates a cinema. The centre was built circa. 1967 and completed in 1972. In 2002 work started on a £22 million renovation project, which was completed in 2006.

3.2 Unit 52 is located within the central area of shops, located on the western row, it is the final unit on the left-hand side when facing Waitrose. All of the shopping frontages on this level are of modern design, both externally and internally.

3.3 The Brunswick Centre is also located within Bloomsbury Conservation Area.

#### **Heritage Significance**

3.4 Within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy (2011) The Brunswick Centre is described as a *'post-war monolithic concrete megastructure.... There are elements of the streetscape surrounding the Brunswick Centre which are of interest and since its refurbishment the shops and restaurants grouped around its open-air precinct have become a popular focal point.'* The Brunswick centre is not mentioned within the Appraisal and Management Strategy as having any shopfronts or internal fit outs of any conservation merit.

3.5 The heritage significance of the Brunswick Centre within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area is the overall character of the building, with the upper floors in residential use, with strong parapet lines and the use of banding to articulate storey heights. The Brunswick Centres neighbourhood centre area has long, continuous frontages of development, with a close relationship to the open pedestrian area in the centre.

3.6 The Bloomsbury Conservation Area Appraisal and Historic England listing description note that the internal aspects of the Brunswick Centre are of no particular historic interest. The external elevations comprise metal windows, metal balustrading and concrete. The Historic England description makes note of the glazed windows and doors which appears to be a key feature to the neighbourhood centres commercial units. As a collective group, the units are recognised as the neighbourhood centre makes a positive contribution to the wider listed building and conservation area and its vitality and viability. It is considered important to ensure that this vitality and viability is not lost and a mix of uses can contribute to this.

## **4. THE PROPOSALS**

4.1 The proposal is for a change of use to a mixed use of Class A1 retail and Class D2 gym with associated ancillary internal alterations as shown on the accompanying proposal drawings. These include minor alterations to the ground floor partitioning to create a juice bar,

reception area, open plan gym area and female changing rooms. No alterations are required to the basement to create the proposed studio area although a few minor alterations are required to the mezzanine level to create the proposed male changing rooms. No alterations are required to the existing plant room.

- 4.2 All proposed alterations involve either the removal or addition of (non-structural) partition walls.

## **5. HERITAGE IMPACT**

- 5.1 The proposed change of use from A2 to mixed A1 and D2 and internal works associated with the change of use will have no impact on the heritage significance of the Grade II Listed Brunswick Centre and its location within the wider Bloomsbury Conservation Area. The change of use will add to the mix of uses found in the vicinity and will help support the vitality and viability of the neighbourhood centre.

- 5.2 Unit 52 is a small section of the Brunswick Centre, which currently has an A2 permission. As a unit in isolation, it doesn't make any specific contribution to the character of the Conservation Area or Listed Building, however, its continued use as a commercial unit is important and the proposed use ensures that the unit is occupied.

- 5.3 The internal works needed to fit out the proposed use will have no impact on the significance of the Listed Building. The current partitions, fixtures and fittings (see photographs below) are of no heritage interest. Therefore, the removal and relocation of minor internal partition walls, together with the application of new finishes throughout will not affect the external appearance, original features, or features of significance, of the overall Listed Building.

