
Cyclone House, 27-29 Whitfield Street, London W1T 2SE

Design & Access Statement





The site viewed from the east at the corner of Whitfield Street and Colville Place.



Internal view of the basement space

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1.0 EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW

Stagg Architects has been commissioned by the owners of 27-29 Whitfield Street to develop designs to refurbish and extend the existing three storey building, to accommodate a mixture of uses including flexible commercial use (A1, B1 and D1) and B1 office space. This Design & Statement sets out our ideas for the proposal and should be read alongside the submitted drawings and the accompanying Heritage Statement produced by Phillip Davies. Other specialists reports have been prepared and submitted with this application in regard to daylight and sunlight analysis, and noise / acoustic attenuation.

This application follows the submission of a similar planning application, which was approved by Camden Council’s planning committee on 6th July 2017, and the section 106 signed by both parties. The application was however subsequently subject to a judicial review and the decision quashed due to claims that the Council did not follow correct procedure. This application seeks approval for a scheme which is in all respects identical to the previous application, except for a different aesthetic approach to the existing render and the top floor roof extension. In terms of size, height, mass, bulk and scale the scheme is identical to the previous application. The specific reasons for the aesthetic changes are explained in further detail later in this document.

1.1 SITE LOCATION AND CONTEXT

The site is located at the corner of Whitfield Street and Colville Place within the Borough of Camden’s Charlotte Street Conservation Area in a predominantly commercial and residential area.

Charlotte Street Conservation Area covers an approximately 8.9ha area extending from Tottenham Court Road in the east to Cleveland Street - the boundary with Westminster in the west - and from Chitty Street in the north to Gresse Street in the south, again adjoining the London Borough of Westminster.

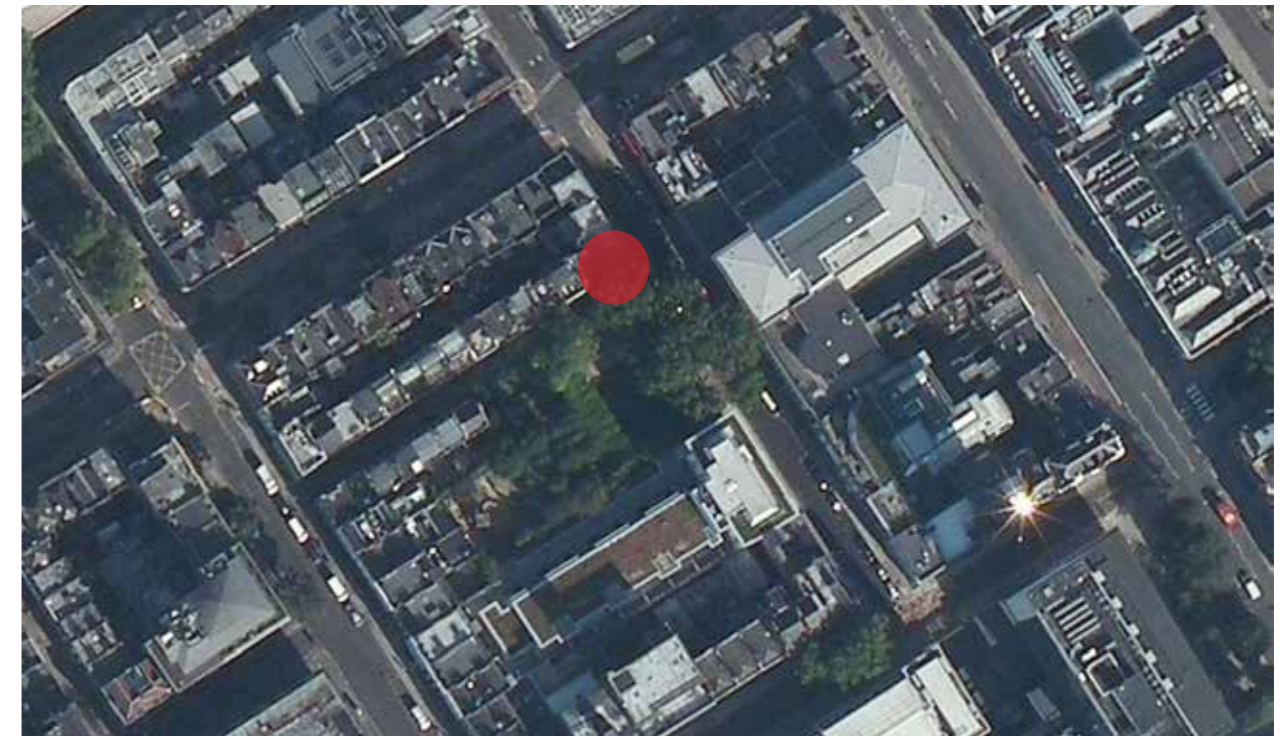
The existing character of the area is mixed with a range of building types evident. At the southern end of Whitfield Street where the building is located, smaller scale mews houses are interspersed with larger modern commercial buildings, shops and public houses, reflecting the growth in commercial activity in the area.

A short walk from Goodge Street and Tottenham Court Road Underground stations and access to numerous bus routes, the area is well connected to the West End, the City and Greater London. The surrounding area is an attractive and cosmopolitan environment and is noted in the Charlotte Street conservation area appraisal to *‘generate a vibrant and lively atmosphere’*.

The application site is bounded by a five storey commercial building to the north-west and four-storey mews houses to the south-west on Colville Place, including No.1 which is grade II listed. The existing building comprises three storeys plus a basement and is thought to have been constructed in 1958. Its style is typical of the period, consisting of a combination of brickwork and render panels, but of no special value overall. The main entrance to the building is on Whitfield Street at ground floor level at the north end of the property. The ground floor is around 80cm higher than the pavement so access is via a small set of steps.







The site location shown in the wider context of west central London



Aerial photograph showing the site in relation to Whitfield Street to the east and Colville Place and Crabtree Fields to the south

1.2 SITE ANALYSIS



-  SITE
-  LISTED BUILDINGS
-  CRABTREE FIELDS - GREEN OPEN SPACE
-  GOODGE STREET AND TOTTENHAM COURT ROAD WITHIN SHORT WALKING DISTANCE



1.3 SITE PHOTOGRAPHS - SURROUNDING CONTEXT



Fig 1 : The site viewed from Whitfield Street showing the difference in height between buildings on Colville Place and Goodge Street.



Fig 2 : The site viewed from Crabtree Fields showing the extent of tree cover provided in winter



Fig 3 : Rooftop view with No.19 Goodge Street in the background two storeys higher than the application building



Fig 4 : Rooftop view looking south towards Colville Place



Fig 5: Rear view from the property looking towards the backs of buildings on Colville Place and Goodge Street



Fig 6 : The existing elevation facing Whitfield Street

1.3 SITE PHOTOGRAPHS - THE EXISTING BUILDING



Fig 7: The basement and lightwell



Fig 8: The rear of the ground floor with sky lights



Fig 9: The existing plastic covered lightwell and fire exit



Fig 10: First floor space



Fig 11: Second floor space



Fig 12: The existing staircase

1.4 SITE HISTORY

A detailed history of the site and its surroundings is provided separately in the accompanying Heritage report by Phillip Davies.

1.5 PLANNING POLICY

The policy framework against which the proposal would be tested consists of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2012) at the national level, the London Plan (2015) at the regional level and Camden’s Core Strategy (2010) and Development Management Plan (2010) at the local level. Further guidance is also provided in the Mayor’s and Council’s SPGs and SPDs.

In accordance with Camden’s Proposals Map (2010), the site is located within Charlotte Street Conservation Area. The closest listed buildings to the application site are at 1 Colville Place, 11-16 Colville Place, and 35 Goodge Street. The site is not located within a flood zone.

The site is located within the Central Activity Zone (CAZ) where local authorities should ‘enhance and promote the unique international, national and Londonwide roles of the CAZ, supporting the distinct offer of the zone based on a rich mix of local as well as strategic uses’ (Policy 2.10). Beyond the CAZ, the main focus for commercial and residential development and intensification will be within the designated town centres (Policy 2.15).

PLANNING HISTORY

Ref. 2016/6495/P

A full planning application was submitted for “Change of use of basement, ground and first floor to flexible uses (Use Class A1/B1/D1), second floor to B1 office, and new single-storey roof extension to create additional B1 office space, rooftop plant enclosure, facade alterations including new front entrance, replacement windows, and infill of lightwell at basement level.”

The application was approved by planning committee on 6th July 2017, and the section 106 signed by both parties, but was subsequently subject to a judicial review and the decision quashed.

Ref. 2013/8158/P

A full planning application was submitted for “Change of use of basement, ground and 1st floors to office (Class B1) use and 2nd floor to Class C3 residential use, single storey roof extension to create two self-contained residential units at 2nd and 3rd floor level, facade alterations, infill of lightwell at basement level, installation of roof plant enclosure and other associated works.”

The application was recommended for approval by the Council’s planning officers, subject to 106 agreement, but the application was not put before the planning committee.

Ref. 2013/2101/PRE

Pre-app advice issued in 2013 for improvement works to the facade of the building, office use at basement to third floors, a two storey roof extension and duplex residential unit at fourth and fifth floors

Ref. 2012/4136/P

Planning permission was granted on 22/10/2012 for the change of use from a courier hub and taxi control office (sui generis) to offices (Class B1a)

Ref. 2003/3178/P

Planning permission was granted on 1/3/2004 for the retention of radio mast on existing Class B1(offices) building.

Ref. 8400185 03/04/1984

Established Use Certificate in respect of the second floor as offices.



Charlotte Street Conservation Area



Listed buildings (red) and positive contributors (orange)

2.1 PROPOSED DESIGN

LAYOUT AND ACCESS

The proposal seeks to add further accommodation to the building by creation of a single-storey roof extension, set back from Colville Place, to provide flexible commercial use on the lower floors and office use on the upper floors, with a small plant enclosure on the roof.

Summary Schedule of Existing and Proposed Areas

	GIA (sqm)	GIA (sqft)
Existing	324.5	3,493
Increase	58.7	632
Proposed	383.2	4,125

The existing building provides 324.5 sqm of space.

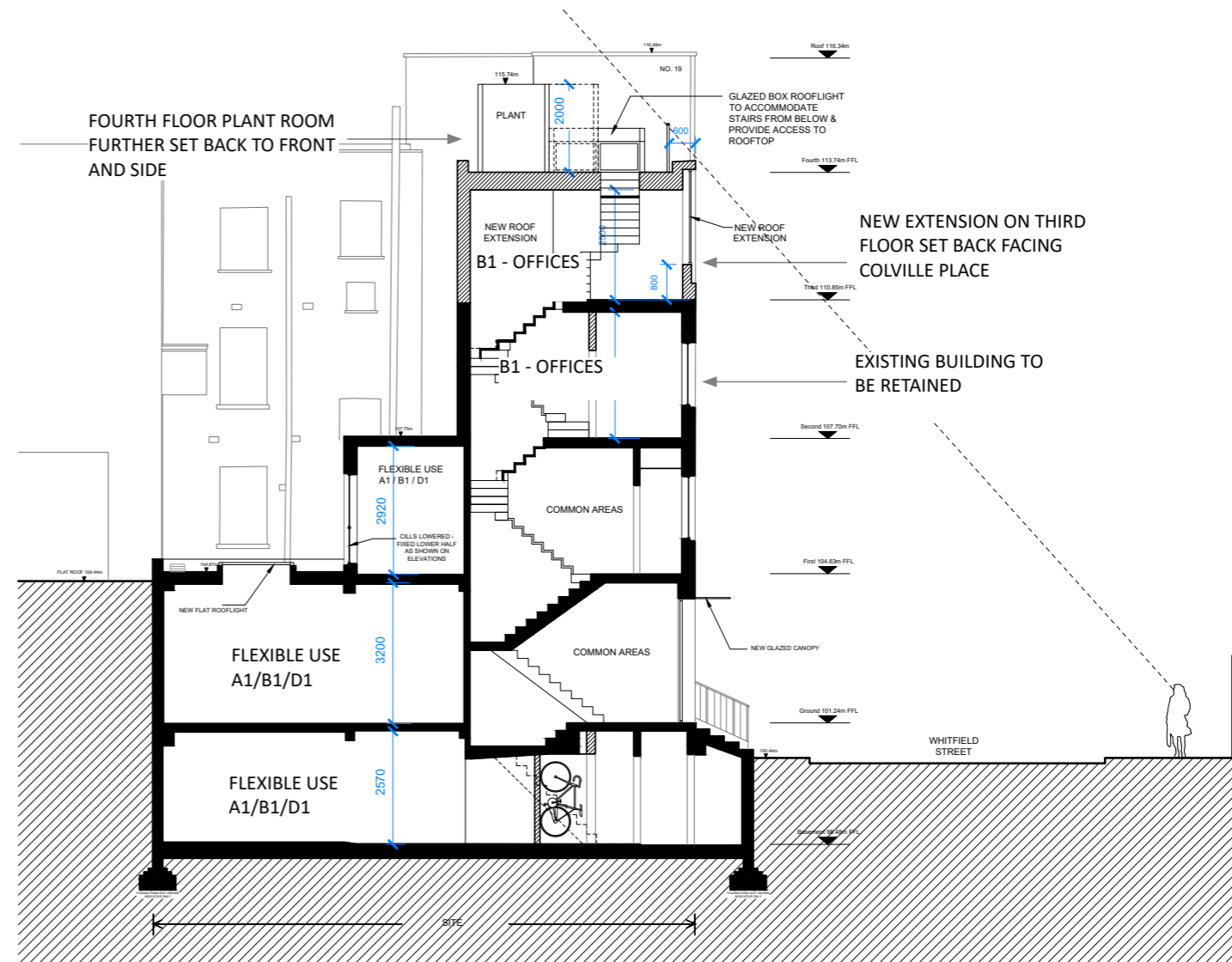
This proposal will add a further 58.7 sqm to achieve a total of 383.2 sqm.

- 271 sqm will be flexible commercial use (A1, B1, D1) at lower ground, ground floor and first floor
- 112 sqm will be for office use on second and third floor.
- 14 sqm of uncovered plant area will be located on the roof.

SCALE AND MASSING

In regard to the extension, the proposed massing and layout has been carefully informed by detailed site analysis and testing proposals in regard to their affect on the surroundings.

The massing of the extension is stepped back to respect the surrounding context and to provide a gentle transition between the four storey mews houses on Colville Place and the substantial five storey building at No.19 Goodge Street. The proposal has been carefully tested using 3D computer software to ensure that the plant area is not visible from streetview at close quarters, and when it is visible from longer distance it will be set against the higher neighbouring building on the corner of Whitfield Street and Goodge Street.



The new third floor extension is designed to be set back by 3.2 metres on Colville Place so that the front face aligns with the top floor of the neighbouring building at no.1 Colville Place. This also means the top floor is less visible in views from Crabtree Fields and on Whitfield Street as demonstrated on the accompanying images. The new extension is designed sensitively to respect the character of the existing building and surrounding area, and improvements will be made to the existing facades by removing the render, exposing and limewashing the original brickwork, and replacing the windows with slim-framed anodized double glazed units.

DAYLIGHT AND SUNLIGHT

An assessment with regard to daylight and sunlight has been carried out for the proposed scheme by Right of Light Consulting, which concludes that overall there is no significant impact on neighbouring properties. The results confirm that the development will have a low impact on the light receivable by its neighbouring properties. A full daylight and sunlight assessment is submitted with the planning application.

2.2 THE EXISTING BUILDING

The neighbouring building on Goodge Street currently steps up by two storeys where the buildings join, creating an abrupt junction between the higher buildings on Goodge Street and the lower buildings on Colville Place. With the addition of a set-back third floor a more gentle transition can be created between the two building scales.



2.2 THE **PREVIOUS** APPLICATION (REF 2016/6495/P)

This image was submitted with the previous application (reference 2016/6495/P) to illustrate the design of the proposals when viewed from the street.

Advice from the Council was followed, including to retain the existing brickwork of the building, and to differentiate the extension from the existing building with a shadow gap.

When the design was first developed, it was believed that it would not be possible to restore the brick beneath the existing render of the building. The previous proposal was therefore to re-render the rendered areas and to clean the existing brickwork.

Since the building already consists of two different materials, this led to the decision to clad the extension with the same render to keep the palette of materials simple.



2.2 THE CURRENT **PROPOSED** SCHEME

During more recent exploratory works to the facade, it became apparent that it is possible to remove the existing render and expose the original bricks beneath. Together with a limewash treatment to blend the existing and newly exposed brickwork, this greatly improves the appearance of the existing building.

Following this approach, the rooftop extension would benefit from clearly distinguishing itself as a new addition to the existing building. In the design we seek to achieve a simple contemporary design through the use of slender concrete frames with vertical glazed elements in between. The use of concrete relates well, both to the treated brickwork beneath and the adjacent modernist listed building at no. 1 Colville Place. The slenderness of the frames and vertical alignment gives the extension a lighter appearance.

We believe that this high quality design would further enhance the visual appearance of the existing building, and contribute positively to the character and appearance of the conservation area as well as the setting of the adjacent listed building.



2.3 PRE-APPLICATION ADVICE

During the application process for the previous scheme, formal pre-application advice was sought from the Council. A pre-application meeting was held at held at Camden Council's office on 22nd June 2016 during which the design was explained and the queries raised in the Council's first pre-application report of 11th May 2016 were clarified. A subsequent meeting was arranged on site with the conservation officer on 24th August 2016, before the Council issued their second pre-application report on 11th October 2016.

We do not intend to list in detail the changes that were made to the previous application, except in summary mentioning that a number of refinements were made in regard to protecting the privacy of neighbours, the removal of terrace areas to prevent the opportunity for overlooking, amending the proportion of the fenestration, and reducing the size of the plant room to reduce its visibility and improve daylight to neighbouring buildings. These numerous amendments were carefully undertaken over a substantial period, in order to achieve the most sensitive design and which resulted in the officers' recommendation for approval.

In regards to this specific proposal we have taken advice from Camden's Conservation Officer, Antonia Powell, who we met on site and who was broadly supportive of the revised approach. This advice was sought as part of a separate application process relating to a minor material amendment to the previous application, but her advice is equally relevant to this application as the proposal remains the same, just the application process is different.

2.4 PUBLIC CONSULTATION

During design development of the previous application we sent letters to local neighbours and had a number of meetings with the neighbour, the owner of no.1 Colville Place, Max Neufeld.

We met Mr Neufeld and explained the proposals to him on 27th October 2016. Mr Neufeld had previously expressed a number of concerns regarding an earlier planning application (submitted in 2013) and we were keen to ensure that we addressed these issues as far as possible.

Mr Neufeld was initially appreciative of the new uses being proposed, insofar as there would be no residential apartments and no A3 use.

A number of his earlier concerns still applied however, such as noise from the rooftop plant, and potential overlooking from the roof terraces.

Changes were therefore made to the terraces, removing them from first, second and third floor level. The only remaining terrace, at fourth floor level, was amended by setting back the railings from the roof edge to limit the potential for overlooking.

In regard to Mr Neufeld's concerns about the plant noise the applicant engaged acoustic specialists KP Acoustics to undertake a noise survey and liaise with the services engineers MLM to ensure that the plant does not exceed Camden's requirements. We notified KP Acoustics of Mr Neufeld's nearby rooflight and they considered this in their analysis. The plant will be designed to meet the Council's policy in this regard.

Mr Neufeld further contested that despite these concessions the proposal would harm the setting of his property, a listed building. We have read his representations to the Council and the planning committee, and have read the letter written by solicitors Leigh Day which formed the basis of the judicial review challenge.

We are therefore very much aware of the views of Mr Neufeld and have tried to accommodate these as far as we reasonably can. We have also taken advice from a specialist heritage consultant, Phillip Davies, who has confirmed our view that the proposal does not harm either the conservation area or the setting of the listed building, but in fact significantly enhances both.

2.5 PREVIOUS APPLICATION ELEVATIONS



Previous Colville Place Elevation



Previous Whitfield Street Elevation

2.5 PROPOSED APPLICATION ELEVATIONS WITH REFINED FACADE DESIGN



Proposed Colville Place Elevation



Proposed Whitfield Street Elevation

2.6 PRECEDENT IMAGES

CONCRETE COLUMNS



The two images above are of the Merkem community centre by Rapp & Rapp



Museum Of Modern Literature in Germany by David Chipperfield.

BRICK TREATMENT



Humblebaek House by Norm Architects



Mortar washed brick wall



Thin vertical galvanised metal railings are proposed for balustrading as they have low visual impact and an elegant proportion

2.7 - DESIGN APPROACH IN REGARD TO THE SURROUNDING HERITAGE ASSETS

Please note that a separate Heritage Assessment has been produced by a specialist heritage consultant, Phillip Davies. In addition to this our design approach is explained below.

Relationship to the Conservation Area

1) The application site is located within the Charlotte Street Conservation Area, which was designated in 1973. The existing building is not highlighted as having special value, but sits adjacent to a Grade II listed building at 1 Colville Place. The remainder of the buildings on Colville Place are considered to be positive contributors, but the other neighbouring buildings, on Goodge Street and on the opposite side of Whitfield Street are not accorded any special value in terms of contributing to the Conservation Area.

2) The buildings previously on the application site, and neighbouring 1 Colville Place, were both destroyed by bombing in the second world war. While the neighbouring building was replaced with a new dwelling house by Max Neufeld in 1964, which gained Grade II listed status in 2000, the application site was redeveloped with the existing three-storey brick and render building. While not entirely without some character, which is representative of its period, the overall composition is that of a rather ordinary post-war building which has the potential to benefit significantly from improvement.

3) In regard to the Conservation Area, the intention of the design is to enhance the character and appearance of the area by adding a sensitive rooftop extension while making significant improvements to the existing building. The existing brickwork will be retained, while the existing render will be removed back to the original brickwork. All the existing brickwork will then be treated with a limewash application to lighten the tone and provide consistency across the facade. The existing windows will be replaced with new high quality double glazed units with anodised aluminium frames.

4) The changes to the façade and new rooftop extension will lend a slightly different proportion to the building, lessening the existing horizontal emphasis and helping the building to sit more comfortably with its neighbours. The new

rooftop extension will be set back from Colville Place at third floor level, by around 3.2 metres so that the front of the extension aligns with the front of the top floor at 1 Colville Place. The rooftop plant is set back further still, some 7.9 metres from Colville Place, and also 2 metres from Whitfield Street, so that this level is only apparent from long distance views where it will be seen set against the higher neighbouring building at 19 Goodge Street.

5) The new roof extension creates a smoother transition from the four storey buildings on Colville Place, up to the neighbouring five storey building on Whitfield Street / Goodge Street. The effect of the massing has been carefully tested with computer generated modelling to ensure it is sensitive to its immediate neighbours as well as the wider context.

The setting of the adjacent listed building

6) In regard to the setting of the adjacent Grade II listed building, careful attention has been given to the proposal to ensure that the qualities that give the listed building its special status are not harmed. The special qualities of 1 Colville Place are set out clearly in its listing description, which describes it as an immaculately detailed, minimal house, a rare example of a modernist infill scheme of sophistication and careful taste. The listing description makes note of external aspects of the house, such as the exposed concrete beams, the thick timber windows, the shopfront and door and the general composition of the façade. It also makes significant reference to the internal aspects such as the built-in joinery and simple minimal detailing.

7) To ensure that these special qualities are not harmed it is necessary for this proposal to respect the setting of the listed building by paying careful attention to the scale, massing, proportion, and appearance of the proposed extension as well as the façade improvements. By setting back the roof extension to align with the top floor of 1 Colville Place, the increased massing will not be overbearing to the neighbour, and will recede from view at street level. Where the extension may come into view from more distant positions, the top floor will then be seen in the wider context, and the smoother transition it creates on this corner will be appreciable. Having considered the special qualities in the listing notice carefully, we do not consider that anything in the proposed design harms or detracts from these qualities.

Furthermore the improvements to the facade of the existing building, primarily

the alterations to the window proportions, the replacement windows, and exposing the original brickwork, will create a better relationship with the listed building as well as a more attractive setting.

8) Although the site abuts the terrace of Colville Place, the proportion of the existing post-war building relates to the larger-scale buildings which front Whitfield Street and the corner with Goodge Street, rather than the buildings on Colville Place. No.1 Colville Place however relates more closely in massing and proportion to the rest of the Colville Place terrace.

The existing building at 27 Whitfield Street does not relate very closely to Colville Place in terms of floor levels, fenestration or parapet height. Indeed 27 Whitfield Street acts as something of a visual stop to the Colville Place terrace. In our view it is appropriate that the corner building should be slightly higher as it forms a bookend to the terrace, and as the gradual stepping is controlled carefully we do not consider that it causes any harm to the special qualities of its neighbour. Indeed at the opposite end of Colville Place, on Charlotte Street, a 'bookend' situation, similar to that which we propose, already exists. Here there is already a four-storey building, but which is not stepped back at the top floor as we propose, but which nevertheless still sits comfortably next to a row of grade-II listed buildings. Due to the proposed setting back of the top floor, the relationship we propose will be gentler than this.

9) Careful consideration has been given to the limewash treatment to the brickwork, in order to ensure that the improved appearance neither detracts from, nor confuses, the relationship with 1 Colville Place. It is felt that a tone which is lighter than the tone of the existing brickwork would work well adjacent to the darker brick of 1 Colville Place, which could then still be read clearly in its own right, and the relationship between the two buildings will not be blurred.

10) Anodised aluminium is proposed for the new window frames as this is a high quality material which reflects the attention to detail, and the simple, minimal and crisp aesthetic we are pursuing. The proposed improvements to the application building will result in a building which is sharper and better proportioned than the existing; a clean and contemporary building constructed from high quality materials. In our view this approach will both enhance the character of the conservation area as well as respect and in many ways enhance the setting of 1 Colville Place.

2.8 ACCESS STATEMENT

Access to the building will continue to be via the external steps on Whitfield Street. The existing stair core will be retained down to the basement and up to the first floor. Above this a new set of stairs will provide access to the second floor and new roof extension.

Access will be improved with the addition of a second stepped entrance from Whitfield Street direct to the ground floor unit. This will ease pressure on the existing staircase while creating a better connection between the ground floor space and the street, helping to improve the relationship between the building and the streetscene.

The Council requested confirmation that the stair will be in accordance with the Building Regulations. We engaged MLM Approved Inspectors to review the designs and they have confirmed compliance by letter.

The site is very well served by public transport and it is envisaged that most users will arrive by foot, cycle or public transport.



Building Control
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Our Ref: RE/8420984/NH
13 October 2016

Dear Meera

**Additional Storey to Existing Building
27-29 Whitfield Street, London, W1T 2SE**

Further to your submission of the revised stair detail for Whitfield Street, we confirm your proposal is in accordance with the recommendations Approved Document K.

Yours sincerely

Natalie Holness BSc(Hons) MRICS
Senior Building Control Surveyor
T: 020 7422 7800
E: natalie.holness@mlm.uk.com

3.1 SUMMARY

Our client, the applicant, is passionate about his building, and keen to deliver the highest quality design which will improve the existing building while carefully respecting the surroundings.

The rooftop extension will increase the provision of commercial accommodation in the area while preserving the character and appearance of the conservation area and the setting of the adjacent listed building, and respecting the amenity of neighbours.

The sensitive design and improvements to the facade will greatly improve the appearance of the existing building, enhancing the appearance of the conservation area as a result.

We listened carefully to the pre-application advice given by the Council in regard to the previous application and worked closely with the Council officers to reach a solution. This application is based very closely on the previous scheme and is identical in terms of its size, height, bulk, scale and massing. The only difference is the facade treatment and the aesthetic design of the roof extension which we believe has a lightness and elegance which enhances the better qualities of the existing building.

We understand and appreciate that this application is considered entirely afresh, and is not to be considered an ‘amendment’ to the previous application, the decision to grant permission having been quashed. Reference is made throughout this document to the earlier application however only to put this scheme in context of the previous application and explain the feedback and advice we received from neighbours and the Council during the determination process.

It is our view that this proposal constitutes a significant enhancement to the existing building as well as the surrounding area, while providing much-needed additional commercial floorspace, and consequently should be granted approval.



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