

HERITAGE STATEMENT

SITE AT 159-165 CAMDEN HIGH STREET

Introduction

This Heritage Statement has been prepared on behalf of Tesco Stores Ltd and relates to the proposed minor works to enable occupation of the retail unit.

The application site is located within the Camden Town Conservation Area. It is not a listed or locally listed building.

Legislation, National and Local Planning Policy and Guidance

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, contains the primary legislative basis regarding buildings and areas of special architectural and historic interest.

Of particular note is Section 69 of the 1990 Act which states that a Conservation Area (CA) is an “area of special architectural or historic interest the character and the appearance of which is desirable to preserve or enhance”. As is stated further within Section 72, local planning authorities should have special regard to desirability of preserving or enhancing all heritage assets, whether Conservation Areas or Listed Buildings and their setting.

The National Planning Policy Framework came into immediate effect on 28th March 2012. The Framework places much emphasis on the protection of the built historic environment. Paragraph 128 of the Framework states that, *‘in determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets’ importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance.*

Notwithstanding this, the overarching principle of the NPPF is a clear presumption in favour of sustainable development as noted within paragraph 14.

“At the heart of the planning system is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan-making and decision-taking”.

In terms of determining applications this means approving development proposals that accord with the Development Plan without delay and granting permission. In cases where the development plan is absent or out of date providing the development is in accordance with the policies contained within the NPPF.

London Plan Policy 7.8 ‘Heritage Assets and Archaeology’ requires all development which have an effect upon heritage assets and their setting to conserve their significance and be sympathetic to their form, scale, materials and architectural detail.

The preservation and enhancement of heritage assets is also prompted at a local level. Local Plan Policy D2 ‘Heritage’ states that ‘the Council will preserve and, where appropriate, enhance Camden’s rich and diverse heritage assets and their settings, including conservation

areas, listed buildings, archaeological remains, scheduled ancient monuments and historic parks and gardens and locally listed heritage assets’.

Assessment of Heritage Assets and Their Setting

Camden Town Conservation Area

The site falls within the Camden Town Conservation Area. The Camden Town Conservation Area is divided into character sub areas. 159-165 Camden High Street is located within sub-area 1. The appraisal outlines that ‘there is greater architectural variety in this sub-area, due to greater pressure for redevelopment since the later 19th century’.

The conservation area appraisal also notes that shopfronts to the south of Britannia Junction have been replaced or altered periodically, resulting in little uniformity at ground level in the High Street. Timber and aluminium frames are the most common, but the quality of their detail varies considerably. There are several examples of shopfronts with oversized signage employing garish materials, which are insensitive to their context, and fascias have been installed at different heights with irregular alignment. Many shopfronts have been fitted with out of keeping roller shutters which deaden the street frontage out of trading hours.

Heritage Considerations

The proposed minor works are sympathetic additions, which take into account the value of the conservation area. The proposed materials would not be overly garish or insensitive to their context. Furthermore the chosen signage effectively advertises the store, but is of a modest size and would not appear overly dominant. The plant and external chiller positioned within the service yard to the rear of the building will not be visible from street level, and thus will not have a detrimental impact on the visual amenities of the conservation area.

Summary - Impact on Local Heritage Assets and Wider Setting

In relation to the established character and appearance of the Conservation Area, the proposals serve only to make a positive visual contribution to the area and will foster a high quality of design.

Additionally, the architectural style of the Camden Town Conservation Area is upheld; the additions are modest and have been designed to be sympathetic to the building’s existing character.

As stated in Paragraph 137 of the Framework, ‘Local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites and within the setting of heritage assets to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements or the setting that make a positive contribution to or better reveal the significance of the asset should be treated favourably’.

As such it is considered the proposals will enhance the appearance of 159-165 Camden High Street and will contribute towards enhancing the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The development proposal would therefore accord with overarching principles to protect, conserve and enhance existing heritage assets within the borough outlined in Policy D2 ‘Heritage’.