

St Giles Circus

Heritage Statement

External colour scheme:

Nos. 6, 7, 9 & 10 Denmark Street

**Prepared for Consolidated
Developments Ltd**

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of report

This report provides a heritage impact assessment of proposals for an application to change the colour of external painted joinery and masonry at Nos. 6, 7, 9 and 10 Denmark Street in the London Borough of Camden.

1.2 Designations

Nos. 6 and 7 Denmark Street are listed at Grade II*. Nos. 9 and 10 are listed at Grade II. All four houses are within the Denmark Street Conservation Area.

1.3 Context of project

Alan Baxter Ltd was appointed by Consolidated Developments Ltd in 2014 to provide strategic conservation and structural engineering advice in relation to the listed buildings being repaired and restored as part of the St Giles Circus regeneration project. For a heritage appraisal of the wider project, see the Heritage Statement by Turley Associates submitted with the St Giles Circus applications in 2012.

2.0 Understanding the heritage assets

2.1 Evolution of the houses

Nos. 6, 7, 9 and 10 Denmark Street were built c. 1686-89 as part of the development of Denmark Street (figs. 1-2). Also surviving from this period are Nos. 5, 20, 26 and 27. Together they make up one of the largest groups of seventeenth-century houses still to be found in central London (see also Buckingham Street and Great Russell Street).

The façades have been altered. They have had their original casement windows replaced by sash windows and their parapets extended up – alterations typical of the early eighteenth century. In other words the façades were ‘Georgianised’. In the nineteenth century the ground floors were converted into showrooms and the street took on an industrial character, with metal-working trades predominating.

In the twentieth century Denmark Street became a centre of music publishing, nicknamed Tin Pan Alley. Each house increasingly took on a separate visual identity, with differences in signage, shopfronts and colour schemes. Celebrated musicians who, in one way or another, have been associated with the buildings, include David Bowie (No. 9), the Rolling Stones (Nos. 4 and 7) and the Sex Pistols (No. 6).

2.2 External colours

By the mid twentieth century each house was in commercial use and displaying different types of signage and external colour schemes. A colour photo showing No. 7 in 1963 shows colourful painted joinery and stucco (fig. 3). Other photos from the era are usually in black and white, but the tone of the window joinery and shopfronts indicates the widespread use of non-white colours (figs. 4-6). This is consistent with the long tradition of use of colour in painted joinery through the eighteenth, nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (see 5.1, esp. Cruickshank and Burton, 189 and Parissien, 63).

The indiscriminate use of brilliant white for all external joinery, seen throughout Britain, is a modern trend that has developed since the Second World War. This fact has been established by historic paint experts such as Patrick Baty (see 5.3). By the late twentieth century this practice had changed the visual character of Denmark Street once more (figs. 1-2). The horizontal string courses and keystones have lost the appearance of stone due to overpainting in white.

3.0 Policy context

3.1 National

The designation of Nos. 6, 7, 9 and 10 Denmark Street as listed buildings and their inclusion in a conservation area means that proposals that affect their special interest will be subject to the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and the policies of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which requires applicants to 'describe the significance of any heritage assets affected' (para. 128).

3.1 Regional and local

Regional policies are addressed in the London Plan (2011 and later) and relevant local policy includes Camden Council's Core Strategy, Development Policies and emerging draft Local Plan. Development Policy DP25 states that Camden will 'only grant consent for a change of use or alterations and extensions to a listed building where it considers this would not cause harm to the special interest of the building'.

4.0 Heritage impact of proposals

3.1 Summary of proposals

The proposals are to re-paint the window joinery and shopfronts of Nos. 6, 7, 9 and 10 Denmark Street in a selective palette of muted colours, as traditionally used on houses of this type. The architectural features, i.e. string courses and keystones, will be in a stone colour. These works will be accompanied by a full programme of repairs to brickwork, doors, doorcases, coping stones, roofs, rainwater goods, render and window cills. For further details please see the drawings and documentation by Ian Chalk Architects.

3.2 Impact on listed buildings and conservation area

The proposals are based on the aims of the wider consented project: to restore a degree of uniformity that will reinforce the group value of the listed buildings (e.g. through window replacement), while at the same time reinforcing the individual character of the houses and their shops/restaurants within the context of the Denmark Street Conservation Area.

For these reasons the architectural features of the houses, i.e. the string courses and keystones, are proposed to be painted consistently in the same stone-coloured paint, whereas the window joinery and shopfronts will be in different colours for different houses. Denmark Street today is recognised for its lively street scene and these changes will respect and enhance that character.

The benefit of the proposals in aesthetic terms is that darker windows recede in prominence, giving visual depth to the façades and emphasising the proportions of the buildings, as well as the warm tones of the brickwork. The success of this effect can be appreciated in the Spitalfields district of London, where the houses are similar in appearance to those on Denmark Street.

No. 10 Denmark Street already has a façade of overpainted brickwork and there is therefore nothing damaging about the proposal to continue with an all-over paint scheme. The possibility of removing the paint from the brickwork has been explored, but discounted on technical grounds. Stripping can be damaging to brickwork, and the decision to re-paint No. 10 instead has been made on conservation grounds.

3.3 Conclusion

In summary, the current use of white paint on window joinery is a modern trend and there is evidence for a more colourful treatment in Denmark Street's past, supported by broader historical trends (see 2.2). The proposals are carefully designed to reinforce the terrace aesthetic, through the consistent use of a traditional stone colour for string courses and keystones, while responding to the individual character of the shops and restaurants, through the use of other traditional colours for joinery. In this way the proposals will enhance the significance of the listed buildings and the appearance of the conservation area.

5.0 Sources

5.1 Books

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John Summerson, *Georgian London*, New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 2003

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5.2 Reports

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Alan Baxter Ltd, *St Giles Circus Heritage Statement: 7 Denmark Street*, December 2017

Alan Baxter Ltd, *St Giles Circus Heritage Statement: 9 Denmark Street*, September 2017

Alan Baxter Ltd, *St Giles Circus Heritage Statement: 10 Denmark Street*, July 2016

Camden Council, *Denmark Place Planning Brief*, 2004

Camden Council, *Denmark Street Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy*, 2010

Turley Associates, *Denmark Street Heritage Statement*, December 2012

5.3 Other

Historic maps of London: Agas, c. 1561; Morgan, 1682; Strype, 1720; Rocque, 1745; Horwood, 1799; Greenwood, 1824-26; Ordnance Survey, 1870; Ordnance Survey, 1894; Ordnance Survey, 1914

Goad fire insurance map, 1888, Vol. VIII, sheet 197 (British Library)

Goad fire insurance maps, 1938 and 1952 (London Metropolitan Archives)

Patrick Baty, 'Painting of Georgian Buildings', online article, accessed 21 December 2017 [<http://patrickbaty.co.uk/2011/12/29/painting-of-georgian-buildings/>]

Appendix A - Images



Figure 1: Nos. 6 and 7 Denmark Street



Figure 2: Nos. 8, 9 and 10 (painted white) Denmark Street. Part of No. 7 is visible on the left



Figure 3: The Rolling Stones outside No. 7 Denmark Street in 1963



Figure 4: Nos. 5, 6 and 7 Denmark Street in 1951 (London Metropolitan Archives)



Figure 5: No. 9 Denmark Street in 1975 (London Metropolitan Archives)



Figure 6: No. 20 Denmark Street in 1951 (London Metropolitan Archives)

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