

Planning, Heritage, Design and Access Statement

Installation of Corten Canopy and Advertisement

Junction of Royal College Street and Camden Road
Rocksteady Bars Ltd



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1. Introduction

- 1.1. This planning statement is submitted on behalf of Rocksteady Bars Ltd (hereafter referred to as the 'applicant') in support of a planning application for the installation of a new predominantly Corten canopy over the existing subterranean unit, formerly used as public lavatories, located at the junction of Royal College Street and Camden Road in Camden.
- 1.2. The application seeks for the installation of a canopy which will protect the proposed new use of the unit as a neighbourhood bar (Application Reference: 2018/0755/P).
- 1.3. This Statement includes a detailed description of the site and the development proposals. It provides an overview of the relevant policy framework, planning history and a full planning assessment. On the basis of this assessment, and based on the Council's adopted policy, the Statement concludes that the application is compliant with planning policy and should be granted accordingly.
- 1.4. **Most importantly, the proposals will achieve the ambitions of the Camden Broadway Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy in bringing forward the opportunity for enhancement of the public realm in this area.**

2. Site Context and Planning History

- 2.1. The proposal site is located at the junction of Royal College Street and Camden Road within the London Borough of Camden. The site is bounded to the east by Camden Road, to the west by Royal College Street, and to the north by a small parade of four shops. The railway bridge serving Camden Road Station bounds the site to the south. Residential units are located above the commercial units to the north.
- 2.2. The site comprises vacant public lavatories believed to have been last used for their original purpose in the 1990s. The public lavatories were closed as part of a borough wide cost saving exercise as toilets are difficult to maintain and are privy to vandalism. The public lavatories have been let commercially in the past however their poor state of repair has resulted in vacancy over the past couple of years. The last know use of the space was for musical instrument storage, which would fall under Sui Generis in terms of use class.

Image 1: View of the Site Looking West



Source: Planning Potential

Image 2: View of the Site Looking East



Source: Planning Potential

- 2.3. The site is not listed however it is within the Camden Broadway Conservation Area. The site is also located within the designated Neighbourhood Centre of Royal College Street / Camden Road.
- 2.4. The surrounding area comprises a mix of uses. Royal College Street and Camden Road provide a number of small independent shops, bars, cafes, restaurants and takeaways alongside other facilities such as dry cleaners and laundry services. Other uses within the area include estate agents, a nail salon, and barbers.
- 2.5. Whilst these uses mainly occupy the lower floors only, residential properties occupy the upper floors in most cases. As noted, the closest residential units are located immediately to the north of the site above William Hill a vacant unit and two small offices.
- 2.6. The nearest bars to the site include 'Draft House' public house which lies south of the site at No.102-104 Camden Road and 'Rullo's Pizzeria Restaurant and Bar' at 47-49 Camden Road.

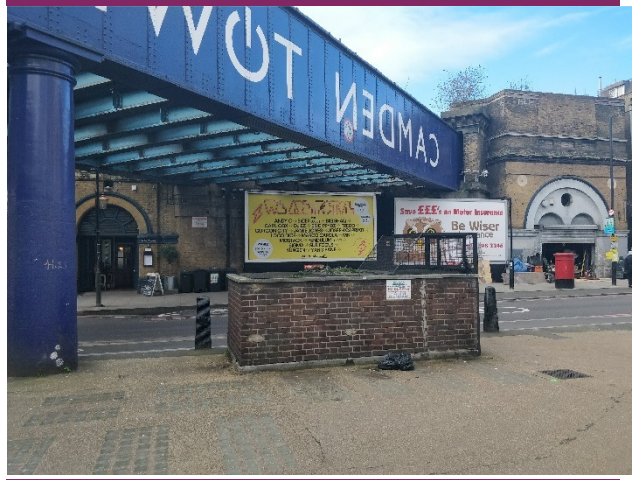
- 2.7. The site is highly accessible by public transport and has a PTAL rating of 6a and 6b (best) as it falls within both. The site is located less than a minute walk from Camden Road Overground Station. Camden Town Underground Station is approximately a 6-minute walk. Access to the Northern Line on the London Underground and efficient access to other hub stations is provided. There are also a number of 24-hour bus services that run along Camden Road (N29, N253 and N279).

Image 3: View of the Steps as Existing



Source: Planning Potential

Image 4: View of the Site Looking West



Source: Planning Potential

Planning History

- 2.8. 2018 - 2018/0755/P – 'Change of use of vacant underground public lavatories (sui generis) to drinking establishment (Use A4)' - PENDING

3. Planning and Design Assessment

Planning Policy

- 3.1. The application proposals are required to be assessed against the adopted Local Development Plan for LB Camden, comprising of the following documents;
- London Plan (March 2016)
 - Camden Local Plan (June 2017)
- 3.2. The National Planning Policy Framework (2012) is also a material consideration in the determination of the application. A summary of the relevant policies is contained at **Appendix 1**.

Proposed Design

- 3.3. The application is seeking a canopy to be installed over the entrance to the proposed neighbourhood bar. The design of the canopy will include mild steel cladding and Corten folded for the roof. A glass box will also be incorporated into the design with an LED screen providing a simple directional advert for the bar.
- 3.4. The design will also include full height doors and a Corten steel canopy with a folded seated bench to provide customers with a sheltered outdoor space.
- 3.5. The proposals seek to create a stylish underground neighbourhood bar from a long-term vacant site in an approach that would contribute to the vibrancy and attractiveness of the town centre. The design will transform a space that is currently unsightly and in need of investment within the Camden Broadway Conservation Area.
- 3.6. The NPPF and Camden Local Plan require proposals that affect heritage assets to be considered in terms of their impact. It is considered that the reuse of a long term vacant unit will have a positive impact on the Camden Broadway Conservation Area. The existing toilets are of a simple brick design with metal caged entrance. The entrance door has been vandalised and is no longer attached to its frame and litter has collected on the stairway. The presence of a Camden Council 'No Dumping' warning sign suggests that there is, or has been, an issue with dumping in this area. The permanent reuse of the space would discourage dumping and encourage the new operator to monitor and deter the issue. This, in itself, will clearly have a positive impact on the public realm and preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area.
- 3.7. The proposed new use of the former underground toilets as a bar, and poor quality of the bricked entrance lends itself to the opportunity for a more contemporary and unique design. The proposed new canopy entrance design will bring some much needed life to what is a generally bleak part of the conservation area.
- 3.8. In this regard, the proposals seek a high quality design, in line with paragraph 56 of the NPPF, Policy 7.4 of the London Plan and Policies D1, D2, D3 and D4 of Camden's Local Plan Policy. **Most importantly, the proposals will achieve the ambitions of the Camden Broadway Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy in bringing forward the opportunity for enhancement of the public realm in this area.**

Advertisement

- 3.9. Along with the new canopy, the proposals also allow for the inclusion of a lightbox with changeable letters and an LED screen. The illumination will be static and set to 250 cd/m². This will help to attract customers to the bar without the need to be brash within the streetscene.
- 3.10. The unit stands alone and so has a difficult job compared to most venues in attracting customers who may not be passing close by to the bar. The proposals will not add to visual clutter in line with Policy D4 of Camden's Local Plan, which sets out the requirements for advertisements.
- 3.11. The advertisements have been sensitively designed and the new materials will offer a fresh and restored appearance to the long term vacant unit, in line with paragraph 56 of the NPPF, Policy 7.4 of the London Plan and Policy D1 and D4 of Camden's Local Plan, which outline the importance of good design.

Summary

- 3.12. The proposed change of use at the site is in full accordance with NPPF guidance, The London Plan and local planning policy. The proposals seek to bring some much needed life to the triangular plot which is a generally bleak part of the wider conservation area.

4. Access

4.1. Access to the unit will remain constant with the single staircase providing access.

Appendix 1: Policy Context

The statutory development plan for the Borough comprise the London Plan (March 2016), the Camden Local Plan (2017).

Camden's Local Plan is supported by Camden Planning Guidance (CPG) Documents. CPG1: Design; CPG5: Town Centres, Retail and Employment; and CPG6: Amenity, all produced in 2013, are relevant to this application.

The application site is not allocated for a particular use on the Council's Proposals Map. The site does however, lie within a designated Neighbourhood Centre (Royal college Street/Camden Road) and Camden Broadway Conservation Area.

A review of the relevant policy is set out below.

National Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (March 2012)

Further to the publication of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) on 24 March 2012, all Planning Policy Statements and Policy Guidance Notes have been revoked and replaced.

The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied, and is a material consideration in planning decisions.

At the heart of the NPPF is a 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'. Paragraph 14 states that for decision-taking this means approving development proposals that accord with the development plans without delay. Paragraph 17 of the NPPF sets out the core principles of planning and reads "encourage the reuse of existing resources, including conversion of existing buildings".

Paragraph 58 states that planning policies and decisions should aim to ensure that developments respond to local character and history, and reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials; and are visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping.

Paragraph 126 notes that it should be recognised that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and conserve them in a manner appropriate to their significance.

Paragraph 128 states that in determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets effected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the asset's importance.

Paragraph 134 states that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage assets, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. The more significant the asset the greater the weight should be.

Paragraph 137 states that local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to or better reveal the significance of the asset should be treated favourably.

Paragraph 186 of the NPPF states that local planning authorities (LPAs) should approach decision-taking in a positive way to foster the delivery of sustainable development. It also

notes that LPAs should look for solutions rather than problems, and decision-takers, at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.

Regional Planning Policy

London Plan (2016)

The London Plan (March 2016) is the strategic plan for London, setting out a fully integrated economic, environmental, transport and social framework for its development until 2036. The local plans of London boroughs must conform to the London Plan and its policies are crucial in guiding decision-making.

Paragraph 1.48 of the London Plan encourages making 'the best use of land that is currently vacant or under used'.

Policy 7.4 'Local Character' states that:

- a. *'Development should have regard to the form, function, and structure of an area, place or street and the scale, mass and orientation of surrounding buildings. It should improve an area's visual or physical connection with natural features. In areas of poor or ill-defined character, development should build on the positive elements that can contribute to establishing an enhanced character for the future function of the area.'*
- b. *Buildings, streets and open spaces should provide a high quality design response that:*
 - a. *Has regard to the pattern and grain of the existing spaces and streets in orientation, scale, proportion and mass*
 - b. *Contributes to a positive relationship between the urban structure and natural landscape features, including the underlying landform and topography of an area*
 - c. *Is human in scale, ensuring buildings create a positive relationship with street level activity and people feel comfortable with their surroundings*
 - d. *Allows existing buildings and structures that make a positive contribution to the character of a place to influence the future character of the area*
 - e. *Is informed by the surrounding historic environment.'*

Local Planning Policy

Camden Local Plan (2017)

Policy A1 'Managing the Impact of Development' states that the Council will:

- a. *seek to ensure that the amenity of communities, occupiers and neighbours is protected;*
- b. *seek to ensure development contributes towards strong and successful communities by balancing the needs of development with the needs and characteristics of local areas and communities;*

c. resist development that fails to adequately assess and address transport impacts affecting communities, occupiers, neighbours and the existing transport network; and

d. require mitigation measures where necessary.

The factors that the Council will consider include:

e. visual privacy, outlook;

f. sunlight, daylight and overshadowing;

g. artificial lighting levels;

h. transport impacts, including the use of Transport Assessments, Travel Plans and Delivery and Servicing Management Plans;

i. impacts of the construction phase, including the use of Construction Management Plans;

j. noise and vibration levels;

k. odour, fumes and dust;

l. microclimate;

m. contaminated land; and

n. impact upon water and wastewater infrastructure.

The supporting text states that the Council will expect development to avoid harmful effects on the amenity of existing and future occupiers and nearby properties or, where this is not possible, to take appropriate measures to minimise potential negative impacts.

Policy D1 'Design' states that:

'The Council will seek to secure high quality design in development. The Council will require that development:

- a. Respects local context and character;*
- b. Preserves or enhances the historic environment and heritage assets in accordance with "Policy D2 Heritage";*
- c. Is sustainable in design and construction, incorporating best practice in resource management and climate change mitigation and adaptation;*
- d. Is of sustainable and durable construction and adaptable to different activities and land uses;*
- e. Comprises details and materials that are of high quality and complement the local character;*
- f. Integrates well with the surrounding streets and open spaces improving movement through the site and wider area with direct, accessible and easily recognisable routes and contributes positively to the street frontage;*

- g. *Is inclusive and accessible for all;*
- h. *Promotes health;*
- i. *Is secure and designed to minimise crime and antisocial behaviour;*
- j. *Responds to natural features and preserves gardens and other open space;*
- k. *Incorporates high quality landscape design (including public art, where appropriate) and maximises opportunities for greening for example through planting of trees and other soft landscaping;*
- l. *Incorporates outdoor amenity space;*
- m. *Preserves strategic and local views;*
- n. *For housing, provides a high standard of accommodation; and*
- o. *Carefully integrates building services equipment.*

The Council will resist development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions.'

Policy D2 'Heritage' states that any harm or loss of a heritage asset must be outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.

Specifically, in relation to conservation areas, the Council will:

e. require that development within conservation areas preserves or, where possible, enhances the character or appearance of the area;

Policy D3 'Shopfronts' states that the Council will expect a high standard of design in new and altered shopfronts, canopies, blinds, security measures and other features.

Policy D4 'Advertisements' states that the Council will require advertisements to preserve or enhance the character of their setting and host building. Advertisements must respect the form, fabric, design and scale of their setting and host building and be of the highest standard of design, material and detail.

The Council will support advertisements that:

- a. preserve the character and amenity of the area; and*
- b. preserve or enhance heritage assets and conservation areas.*

The council will resist advertisements that:

- c. contribute to an unsightly proliferation of signage in the area;*
- d. contribute to street clutter in the public realm;*
- e. cause light pollution to nearby residential properties or wildlife habitats;*
- f. have flashing illuminated elements; or*
- g. impact upon public safety.*

Camden Planning Guidance 6 (CPG6) Amenity (2013)

Guidance given within CPG6: Amenity reiterates the importance of minimising the harm caused on the local area and residential amenity. The document guides developments in how proposals can minimise the impact of noise and vibration.

The guidance states that impact can be minimised through design such as through designing shape and orientation to reflect noise and protect the most sensitive uses. The document also discusses measures such as insulating and soundproofing.

Camden Broadway Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy

Page 12 of the Conservation Area Appraisal describes the site as a kerbed triangular area extending partly under the railway bridge. On this triangle is situated a brick 'box', which is a former public toilet, beside one of the bridge's supporting columns. The description of the area continues to say that:

"Being located between two roads of fast moving, noisy traffic and overshadowed by the railway bridge, the area is somewhat blighted, and represents a significant opportunity for enhancement of the public realm"

The area is also specifically mentioned for its high level of traffic.