

Monmouth Planning Ltd

135 Finchley Road
London
NW3 6JH

Planning, Design and Access Statement

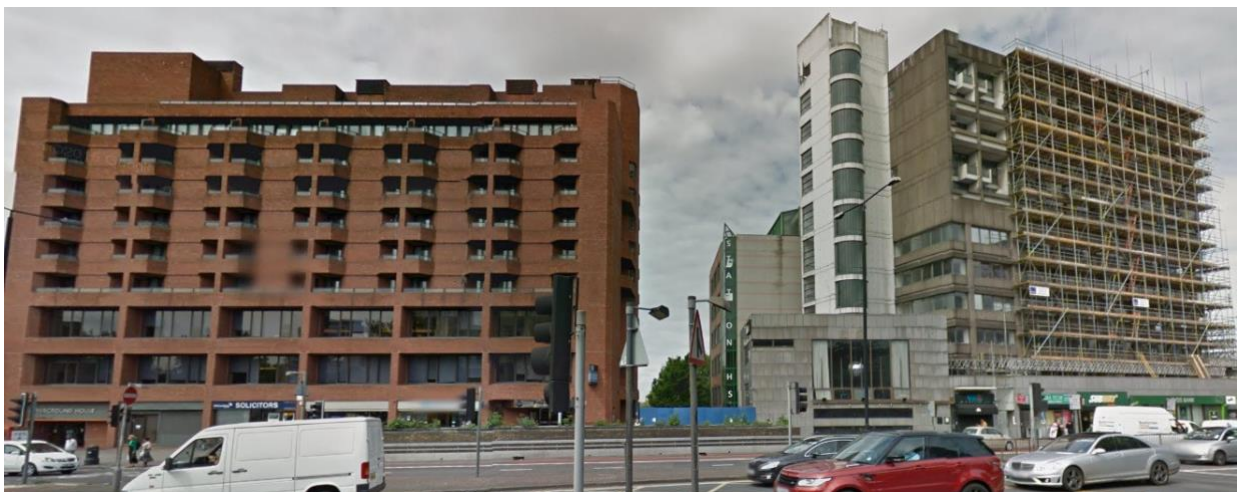
Retention of lighting fixed behind the aluminium perforated screen façade to the
existing front and side elevations

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This planning, design and access statement has been prepared on behalf of the applicant Finchley Road Limited, in support of the planning application submitted via the planning portal for the retention of the light strips installed behind the aluminium perforated cladding fixed to the existing front and side elevations of the building at 135 Finchley Road.
- 1.2 135 Finchley Road was formerly used as a nightclub. The premises have now been taken over by the applicant and used for restaurant/club purposes. The property is located opposite a major junction on Finchley Road (the A41) adjacent to Swiss Cottage underground station. The property is not listed nor is it located within a conservation area.
- 1.3 This application seeks permission to illuminate the front and side external façade in part to enable improved visibility of the building. The proposals have been developed in consultation with the guidance set out by the Institute of Lighting Professionals.
- 1.4 The application site is orientated away from the neighbouring properties so that there is no light spill into the windows nor will the proposals impede their view of the night-time sky, in compliance with the Council's planning policies.
- 1.5 This statement provides details of the proposals and an assessment of the proposals against national, regional and local planning policies. This statement assesses the impact the proposals will have on local amenity in terms of the character and appearance of the local area and light spill to neighbouring properties.
- 1.6 This statement should be read in conjunction with the drawings submitted with this application package.

2. Site and Local Area Description

- 2.1 135 Finchley Road was formerly used as a nightclub. The premises have now been taken over by the applicant and used for restaurant (Class A3) purposes. The property is located opposite a major junction on Finchley Road (the A41) adjacent to Swiss Cottage underground station.



Photograph 1 Site photo 135 Finchley Road – Prior to the installation of the perforated aluminium cladding



Photograph 2 – 135 Finchley Road –Perforated Aluminium cladding installed



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MAP 1 - Location plan of 135 Finchley Road

- 2.3 The building was built in the 1960's as part of the Centre Heights development, a large mixed-use scheme with buildings of 1, 2 and 11 storeys in height fronting on to Finchley Road. The application building comprises the two-storey element which has recently been partially clad with perforated aluminium panels to both the front and side elevations facing Finchley Road and Swiss Cottage underground station. The 11-storey tower (Centre Heights) is currently being refurbished for residential use. We have reviewed the approved plans and can confirm that none of the living accommodation will be impacted upon by this proposal as none of the rear facades of the application site will be illuminated.
- 2.4 Adjacent to the site is 125-131 Finchley Road which is a mixed-use building comprising commercial uses at basement, ground and first and second floors with residential use at 3rd to 9th floor level. None of the residential units within this property have bedroom or living room windows facing directly onto the application site. The side windows facing the application premises serve the communal areas, stairwells and the lobby areas to the residential block.
- 2.5 To the rear of the application is Mount View Lodge a residential block which does not have any bedroom or living room windows facing directly onto the application site and furthermore none of the illuminated facades face onto this residential block.
- 2.6 The application property is not listed and is not located within a Conservation Area.
- 2.7 The local area is rather plain, and the existing surrounding buildings are not considered to enhance or contribute to the character and appearance of the local area. In the immediate vicinity of the application site, the character is derived from the activity generated by the retail and commercial uses that front on to Finchley Road. At upper floor level the appearance of this part of Finchley Road is dominated by large high rise monolithic buildings which have an imposing appearance upon the application site (see photos 3, 4, 5 and 6 below).



Photograph 3 – front of application site, Cresta House and Centre Heights



Photograph 4 – Long view of application site looking towards Swiss Cottage underground station



Paragraph 5 – View of application site looking north with Centre Heights in the background.



Photograph 6 – Royal Centre of Speech and Drama – view from application site towards College Crescent

- 2.8 Photograph 7 below illustrate the high level illuminated sign installed at 3rd to 5th floor level at New College Parade, Finchley Road located just to the north of the application site. Photograph 8 below shows the illuminated signs opposite the application site adjacent to Royal Centre of Speech and Drama located on College Crescent opposite the application site and Cresta House. This clearly demonstrates that this part of Finchley Road is dominated by large internally illuminated facades.



Photograph 7 – New College Parade – High Level internally illuminated signage



Photograph 8 – Royal Centre of Speech and Drama

3. Relevant Planning History

- 3.1 Planning permission 2015/5554/P was granted for the installation of an aluminium perforated screen fixed on aluminium rails on the existing front and side elevations.
- 3.2 Planning permission 2015/4946/P was granted for alterations to the fenestration at ground and first floor level and for the replacement of the existing vertical framed windows between the ground and first floor level with horizontal aluminium double glazed windows.
- 3.3 It is also relevant to note that the Council granted planning permission and listed building consent (LPA reference 2-14/3985/P and 2014/4110/L) on 9 September 2014 for the retention of external lighting at Rosewood London 252 High Holborn WC1V 7EN. The property is grade II listed and located within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area.

4. Proposals

- 4.1 The applicant is seeking planning permission for the retention of the lighting system installed behind the perforated façade at 135 Finchley Road. The new lights have been installed behind the perforated panels fixed to the front and side facades of the building. None of the light fittings are visible. The lighting proposed will provide for a warm white light which will illuminate the perforated areas of the cladding. The lighting levels have been set at 20cdm2 which is lower than the level recommended by the Institution of Lighting Professionals Guidance GN01:2011 which states that the maximum luminance level of a building in an urban area should be 25cd/m2.
- 4.2 The overall aim of the proposals is to softly highlight the detail within the perforated cladding and not to illuminate the building in such a way that would harm the character and appearance of the local area or harm local amenity.

5. Relevant Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (adopted March 2012)

- 5.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's core planning principles for England and how these are expected to be applied. The NPPF sets out the Government's requirements for the planning system. The NPPF states that planning should 'always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings'. Furthermore, developments should take account of and support local strategies to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing for all.
- 5.2 The NPPF encourages high quality design and emphasises that decisions should not attempt to impose architectural styles or particular tastes and they should not stifle innovation, originality or initiative through unsubstantiated requirements to conform to certain development forms or styles. In addition, whilst the design of individual buildings is considered very important, it is stated that securing high quality and inclusive design goes beyond aesthetic considerations. Therefore, proposals are encouraged to address the connections between people and places and the integration of new development into the natural, built and historic environment. In this respect, 'in determining applications, great weight should be given to outstanding or innovative designs which help raise the standard of design more generally in the area' (Paragraph 61).
- 5.3 The NPPF Advocates the use of good design, planning policies and decisions in order to limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation (Paragraph 125).

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

- 5.4 National Planning Practice Guidance provides detail on the factors that should be considered when assessing whether a development proposal might have implications for light pollution. In summary, these are whether the proposal could;
- Materially alter light levels outside the development;
 - Have a significant impact on a protected site or species;

- Be located near or protected area of dark sky or an intrinsically dark landscape;
- Have potentially high impact upon wildlife; or
- Include smooth and or reflective building materials.

The London Plan - The Spatial Development Strategy for London Consolidated with Alterations Since 2011 (Adopted March 2016)

- 5.5 The London Plan is the overall strategic plan for London, setting out an integrated economic, environmental, transport and social framework for the development of London over the next 20-25 years. The London Plan only deals with things of strategic importance for Greater London and brings together the geographic and locational aspects of the Mayor's other strategies taking into account the three cross cutting themes:
- Economic development and wealth creation;
 - Social development; and
 - Improvement of the environment.
- 5.6 Policies relevant to the proposals include the following:
- Policy 7.4 (A) Local Character – Development improve and area's visual or physical connection with natural features. In areas of poor or ill-defined character, development should build positive elements that contribute to establishing an enhanced character for the future function of the area.
 - Policy 7.6 (B) Architecture – buildings and structures should
 - Be of the highest architectural quality;
 - Be of a proportion, composition, scale and orientation that enhances, activities and appropriately defines the public realm;
 - Comprise details and materials that complement, not necessarily replicate, the local architectural character;
 - Not cause unacceptable harm to the amenity of surrounding land and buildings, particularly residential buildings;

Camden Local Plan (Adopted 2017)

- 5.7 The Camden Local plan sets out the Council's planning policies. It is a key document in Camden's development plan. Camden's Local Plan will help deliver the objectives of the Council in creating the conditions for harnessing the benefits of economic growth, reducing in equality and securing sustainable neighbourhoods.
- 5.8 Policies relevant to the proposals include the following:
- 5.9 Policy A1 – Managing the Impact of Development – the Council will seek to protect the quality of life of occupiers and neighbours. The Council will grant permission for development unless this causes unacceptable harm to amenity. The Council will;
- Seek to ensure that the amenity of communities, occupiers and neighbours is protected;
- 5.10 Policy D1 Design – states that the Council will seek to secure high quality design in development and will seek to secure development that will:
- a) Respect the local context and character;
 - b) is sustainable in design and construction, incorporating best practice in resource management and climate change mitigation and adaptation;

- c) is of sustainable and durable construction and adaptable to different activities and land uses;
- d) comprises details and materials that are of high quality and complement the local character; and
- e) integrates well with the surrounding streets,

6 Planning Design and Access Considerations

Design

- 6.1 The proposal includes the retention of the existing light fixtures, which have been fixed internally behind the existing perforated aluminium cladding to the front and side to the building.
- 6.2 Due to the scale and ornate decorative faced the building does have a landmark quality on Finchley Road. It is considered that given that the building is used a restaurant and bar which operate well into the evening it is appropriate that the building is suitably illuminated in the evenings so as to contribute to the lively character and appearance of the local area.
- 6.3 The lighting only picks up on the perforated features of the new cladding fixed to the building and will not illuminate the whole façade of the building, only part of the façade is clad in the perforated panels the rest of the facades are either not clad at all or are partially clad in greenery and will remain non-illuminated. The approach proposed will allow for the architectural quality of the building to take precedence rather than the overall scale of the building, which in any event is much smaller than its neighbouring properties which range in height from 5 storeys to 11 storeys.
- 6.4 The lighting level will be such that will not project light into the night sky
- 6.5 None of the light fixtures are visible as such the proposals will not harm the character and appearance of the local area or the host building in line with Local Plan Policy D1 (Design) and furthermore the works will preserve the character and appearance of the local area which is not located within a conservation area.

Access

- 6.6 The proposals do not include any alterations to the ground floor access or any change of use. as such it is considered that there are no access considerations relating to these proposals.

Amenity

- 6.7 In terms of amenity the proposals have been developed and adjusted in line with the Councils advice on lighting and whilst we acknowledge that there are a number of residential properties adjacent to the application site none of the buildings have any living room or bedrooms which overlook the application site. Where they do we confirm that these facades will not be illuminated.
- 6.8 Included with this application package is a plan showing the orientation of the surrounding residential buildings. Cresta House is located to the south of the application site. All the windows on the north elevation of Cresta House serve the communal areas, store rooms or lobby area. The living rooms and bedrooms are either located to the rear or front of the building and are protected by the flank wall which faces the application site. Please refer to drawing FIN/A4/01

- 6.9 To the rear of the site is Mount View Lodge again this property has been converted to residential use. and has been designed so that none of the living rooms or bedrooms face onto the application site. Again, none of the properties will be directly impacted upon by this scheme in terms of light pollution. Please refer to drawing FIN/A4/01
- 6.10 The residential units at Centre Heights do not face onto any facades with the illuminated perforated cladding as such they will not be impacted upon in terms of direct light into their properties. Please refer to drawing FIN/A4/01.
- 6.11 The lighting levels have been reduced in accordance with the advice received from officers and the proposals have been developed in consultation with the Institution of Lighting Professionals (ILP) Guidance Notice for the reduction of Obstructive Light (GN01:2011). The lighting levels will ensure that the proposals do not cause a nuisance by impeding views of the night sky and does no cause glare or light intrusion. In accordance with the recommendations set out in the ILP guidance the building luminance level will be set at 20cd/m². This will avoid over lighting of the building.
- 6.12 It is considered that the proposals will accord with Policy A1 – Managing the Impact of Development and would protect the quality of life of occupiers and neighbours. The proposals would not cause unacceptable harm to amenity. The proposals will ensure that the amenity of communities, occupiers and neighbours is protected.

7 Conclusion

- 7.1 Planning permission is sought for the retention of the lighting strips installed behind the aluminium perforated cladding fixed to the existing front and side elevations of the building at 135 Finchley Road.
- 7.2 This application seeks permission to illuminate the front and side external façade in part to enable improved visibility of the building. The proposals have been developed in consultation with the guidance set out by the Institute of Lighting Professionals.
- 7.3 The application site is orientated away from the neighbouring properties so that there is no light spill into the windows nor will the proposals impede their view of the night-time sky, in compliance with the Council's planning policies.
- 7.4 An assessment of the proposals demonstrate that the proposals will not harm local amenity in terms of light pollution. The proposals will enhance the character and appearance of the local area.