

HERITAGE STATEMENT

SITE AT UNIT 3, 10 BLOOMSBURY WAY LONDON, WC1A 2SL

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 Bloomsbury Conservation Area. It is not a listed building, however it was highlighted as making a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area in the conservation area appraisal.

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 In cases where the development plan is absent or out of date providing the development is in accordance with the policies contained within the NPPF.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

Bloomsbury Conservation Area

The site falls within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area. 10 Bloomsbury Way is noted within the conservation appraisal:

"To the east of Museum Street, on the triangular site where New Oxford Street and Bloomsbury Way merge, stands St George's Court, Nos 2-28 (even) New Oxford Street and Nos 2-12 (even) Bloomsbury Way. This neo-classical office block, built to the designs of Lewis Soloman in 1947-50 as part of the postwar Lessor scheme, is monumental in scale, comprising nine storeys clad in a brown brick with stone dressings. It was built with various functions at street level including a public house and originally a bank at the western apex (now an army careers office). Its apex facing west forms a distinctive landmark visible from the Oxford Street and Tottenham Court Road junction, and its height creates a strong sense of enclosure along side neighbouring buildings including the tall and bulky concrete mass of the postwar former Royal Mailing sorting office to the south (situated outside the Conservation Area)".

Heritage Considerations

The proposed minor works are sympathetic additions, which take into account the value of 10 Bloomsbury Way as a heritage asset. The proposed louvres on New Oxford Street blend into the design of the existing louvres already present on other elevations of the building. They would therefore not represent an inappropriate modern addition to the area, and would be in line with its existing character.

The proposed set back door on the corner of Bury Place and New Oxford Street is also a sympathetic addition and a subtle change from the existing doorway. It allows the existing symmetry to be maintained with the windows above whilst maintaining the stonework on the existing building. It would not appear unduly prominent or cause any adverse impact visually.

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 10 Bloomsbury Way 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 10 Bloomsbury Way 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’ of Camden’s Local Plan.