

# 14 & 15 SOUTHAMPTON PLACE

Design and Access Statement

March 2018

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Above: Locatoin Plan

# 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1

The proposals seek to bring back into use two currently vacant office buildings within a key central London location in Holborn. The buildings were previously subject to an application for Listed Building Consent which was granted on 01 November 2017 (Ref: 2017/2248/L).

## 1.2

These new proposals build on the extant consent but propose further details of works including the provision of new shower facilities, air conditioning, flooring and the provision of new external plant equipment as well as other associated works.

## 1.3

The proposals continue to represent an exciting opportunity to enhance the activity around Holborn and upgrade the Grade II\* Listed buildings. This is in line with national and local planning policy which seeks to ensure that buildings are in the optimum use and protect the historical fabric of London.

## 1.4

The proposals seek to provide flexible working space for SME's in the heart of Holborn. The proposal is for co working and shared workspaces aimed at helping small businesses to grow.

## 1.5

At the forefront of the proposals is the intent to create a genuinely advanced workplace combined with smart design to support and be a part of Holborn's new profile, helping put it on the map as a destination for the modern worker and to take advantage of the new Crossrail connections at Tottenham Court Road.

## 1.6

The proposals will create a dynamic eco-system, job prospects and diverse events that will bring businesses and entrepreneurs to Holborn.

# 1 INTRODUCTION

## CONT.

1.7

This Design & Access Statement has been prepared by Od Projects on behalf of Sicilian Lab Tech Investments Ltd ('the applicant') in support of a full planning application and listed building consent for the proposed refurbishment and upgrading of 14 and 15 Southampton Place.

1.8

The description of development is as follows:

*“Application for full planning permission and listed building consent for refurbishment and restoration of 14 and 15 Southampton Place to retain office (B1) floorspace including installation of new plant equipment and other associated works”.*

## 2 THE APPLICANT &

### VISION

#### 2.1

The overall vision for the Holborn Links Estate has been presented to planning officers at Camden as part of initial, high level pre-application discussions.

The overarching vision for the Holborn Links Estate is to create a new employment led destination for the London Borough of Camden. As part of this vision, LABS intend to create vibrant co-working spaces, focussing on innovative approaches to collaborative working in modern office environments that are capable of supporting small to medium enterprise. In addition, proposals will seek to activate street frontages and promote visual interest in the streetscape.

The buildings on the estate will be managed by LABS whose innovative model allows buildings and users to have immediate access to a connected community and a wealth of intuitive products and services, including a unique technology package. The LABS vision and their approach to the work environment reflects today's worker; every aspect inspires creation, productivity, and collaboration. Users will have the ability to book meeting rooms, engage with their community and access much-needed productivity tools - all whilst being within a key central London location.

The proposals will form a positive contribution to Holborn, promoting a greatly increased employment offer in the area whilst also encouraging flexible and user-friendly work spaces. LABS aim to establish a unique identity in Holborn by introducing inspirational co-working and shared workspaces - helping businesses and entrepreneurs to get started, learn and grow their businesses.

The overall vision will create a dynamic eco-system, job prospects and diverse events that will bring businesses and entrepreneurs to Holborn. Furthermore, existing, underused buildings (including listed buildings) will be sensitively refurbished as part of a programme of investment to ensure the continued vibrancy of the estate. The proposals will contribute to putting Holborn on the map as a destination for the modern worker and are well placed to take advantage of the benefits of major new infrastructure such as the new Crossrail connections at Tottenham Court Road.

## 3 SITE & SURROUNDINGS

### 3.1

The application site consists of two adjoining buildings located within Holborn which is a key central London location comprising of a mix of uses including commercial, residential, retail, cultural and leisure uses.

### 3.2

14 and 15 Southampton Place comprise part of a terraced block which as a group are Grade II\* Listed. The buildings date back to the mid-18th century and they comprise of darkened multi-colour stock brick with a stone band at first floor level and a tiled mansard roof with dormers. The buildings are three storeys in height, with an attic and basement. The buildings are currently vacant but have historically been used for Class B1 office space or educational Class D1 use.

Both buildings are located in a highly accessible central London location with a PTAL rating of 6b (considered the best level of connectivity). Holborn Underground Station is located a short walk from the site and is served by the Central and Piccadilly lines. Tottenham Court Road is located further west of the site and will soon be served by Crossrail which will provide a route west and east of central London.

### Site specific policy designations

### 3.3

In accordance with Camden's adopted Policies Map, the site has the following site specific policy designations:

- Located within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area;
- Located within the Central London Area; and
- Located in a transport Safeguarding Area

The site is also located within the CAZ frontage of the Central Activity Zone (CAZ) as designated by the London Plan (2016).

## 4 SITE HISTORY

### 4.1

14 and 15 Southampton Place are Grade II\* Listed buildings and located within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area. In accordance with national policy (paragraph 131-134 of the NPPF), any scheme is required to assess its effect on heritage significance.

The site history and its historical context is covered further in the accompanying Heritage Assessment. The Heritage Statement concludes that overall the proposals seek to return the buildings to their former quality with a comprehensive programme of restoration and sympathetic refurbishment. This will positively enhance the special interest of the listed buildings and the conservation area.

## 5 DESIGN PROPOSALS & EVOLUTION

### 5.1

Planning Permission and Listed Building Consent is sought for refurbishment works to the properties to facilitate the use of the buildings as co-working office floor space in addition to the installation of new plant equipment. This application responds to comments raised at a pre application meeting with Camden officers. The application proposals are described in more detail below and the accompanying Drawings.

### 5.2

#### **Appearance**

The combination of years of neglect to No. 15 and a history of unsympathetic alterations to No. 14 demands a meticulous approach to their modification that will ensure their regeneration is sensitively crafted without detriment to their heritage. The refurbishment and restoration strategy outlined within the accompanying drawings, seeks to ensure that all the elements significant to the building's history will be carefully conserved and restored while the facilities associated with its upgraded B1 usage will be sensitively inserted.

The buildings' external elevations will undergo sensitive but essential restoration works. Damaged masonry, cornices, sills and window reveals will be restored and the existing period sash windows will be overhauled and redecorated. However, following instruction from Camden at the Pre Application stage, the brickwork will not be cleaned. Both front doors will retain their existing heritage ironmongery. Small black security fob readers will be applied to both sides of the doors to enable user access.

Internally the proposed works seek to establish a modern co-working office environment that is fit for purpose. However, the upgrading works will ensure historical elements are protected and retained. Key original period features such as the staircases, dado rails, cornices, skirtings and window surrounds will be carefully restored ensuring that the historical characteristics of both properties are suitably reinstated.

### 5.3

#### **Layout & Scale**

Only non original walls and joinery items are proposed for removal. The existing original subdivision of the floors will remain unchanged.

### 5.4

Details of the proposed works include the following:

- Replacement of a solid door to the rear of number 15 with a new glazed door and window allowing access to the rear courtyard;
- Installation of new shower facilities;
- New light fittings and wifi boxes throughout;
- Refurbishment to existing doors to provide electronic access;
- New timber flooring over existing floorboards;
- Installation of new, external plant equipment, located in a discreet lightwell location which will not harm the setting of the heritage asset and
- Reinstatement of opening between the properties on second floor



## 5 DESIGN PROPOSALS & EVOLUTION

### CONT.

The bulk of the accompanying set of drawings included within this Planning-Application package provide further detail of the mechanical, electrical and audiovisual installations required to facilitate the proposed co-working spaces within the buildings. The proposed air conditioning system comprises of 2 No. external condenser units strategically located within the existing light well of No. 15. This location was specifically chosen to mitigate against the potential negative visual impact on the adjacent residential properties overlooking the rear of No.s 14 & 15. Internally new service routes will be required within the existing floor voids to distribute pipework and power supplies from the external condensers to floor mounted air conditioning units situated within meeting rooms and offices. The internal units will be concealed by bespoke joinery covers, sympathetically detailed and constructed to avoid damaging the buildings' historic fabric.

Whilst the current LBC [ref 2017/2248/L] grants consent to utilise existing electrical routes, outlets and fixture locations there will be instances where additional routes and fixtures are required. This application seeks permission to install new service routes and fixtures within the buildings to accommodate additional electrical and audio visual requirements. Where this occurs within the original building fabric affected areas will be carefully prepared and restored using traditional building techniques to match the existing condition.

In addition to the proposed building services details this application also requests permission to install a real wood floor finish over the existing floorboards in lieu of the vinyl finish as approved in LBC 2017/2248/L. The provision of two changing cubicles with their own showers is also requested within the lower ground level of No. 15.

Permission to reinstate a door opening between the two properties on the second floor providing a direct link between No.s 14 & 15 is also sought. A new door displaying period features to match the existing period doors within the properties will be installed within the opening.

The application also includes proposed alterations to the non original rear ground floor elevation of No. 15 comprising of a new larger opening to accommodate contemporary full height glazing and a new door.

### 5.5

#### **Pre Application Advice**

Pre Application advice [Ref 2017/6860/PRE] was received on the 26th January 2018 following a site visit with Elizabeth Martin on 17th January 2017.

This application directly addresses comments and areas of concern raised at the site meeting and subsequently listed within the Pre Application report.

These comments have been itemised below with accompanying responses:

*With regards the proposed new flooring, it is noted that listed building consent ref 2017/2248/L permitted the installation of vinyl over a ply backing. In this submission, it is sought to replace the approved vinyl with an engineered timber floor. Whilst there is no objection to this in principle, the acceptability will depend on the proposed finish; cutting notches into skirting boards or other joinery will not be acceptable. Further details on this should be submitted at application stage'*

## 5 DESIGN PROPOSALS & EVOLUTION

CONT.

We propose to install a 12mm engineered timber floor with an oak finish in a Herringbone pattern, as detailed on accompanying drawings. No existing period joinery features such as window surrounds, architraves or skirtings will be notched or damaged in any way to accommodate the proposed flooring. The proposed planks will be scribed against all existing period features. A cork infill will be applied to all interfaces around architraves and window surrounds. A perimeter timber profile will be fixed to the floor to conceal the interface between the skirting and proposed timber.

- *'As also discussed on site, it should be made clear in the submitted application that AV screens are being positioned only where necessary for the functioning of the office space and that their installation will not impact or obscure any panelling or other architectural features'.*

The extent of existing wood panelling is limited to the front room of No. 14. The proposed screen within this room will not interfere with or cover any of this panelling. The screens for the remaining rooms have been strategically positioned to enable the successful use of audio visual facilities.

- *'Where proposed new door handles deviate from the traditional brass ironmongery approved under application ref 2017/2248/L, it should only be where security/access panels are necessary. I note that changes to the locking mechanism are also proposed for the front door; further details should be submitted at application stage so the acceptability can be assessed. Modern ironmongery on the front door will not be supported'*

Details of the proposed internal ironmongery are included within accompanying drawings [648\_615]. The existing heritage ironmongery on the front doors will be retained. A small black surface mounted security fob reader will be added to enable user access.

- *'The works to the modern rear extension include cleaning and making good/ replacing the existing modern skylights, replacing the modern door with a glazed door and window and providing a new cosmetic wall lining with brick slip finish to the existing corner walls. There is no objection to these works, subject to the detailed design of the new door, windows and skylights (where replaced)'*

Further details of the proposed rear ground extension works are included within accompanying drawing [648\_309].

## 6 SUSTAINABILITY

### 6.1

The key driver in the Sustainable Design strategy for the proposal is to create a sense of place made exceptional through the highest standard of design and delivery. The existing building fabric of No. 14 & 15 will be upgraded to meet the performance requirements of the current Building Standards where it is possible to do so without affecting the listed status. Refurbishment works to the modern ground floor rear extension will meet or exceed current standards.

The properties will utilise an energy efficiency management plan to help lower its carbon footprint in operation, involving a coherent approach to saving on lighting and heating.

All contractors employed on the development will adopt The Considerate Contractor scheme; this demands a recycling, energy and water management strategy while on site.

Construction waste will be minimised through the efficiency of design.

The use of efficient LED lights and PIR zoning will all help to reduce the carbon footprint of the building.

The existing ageing heating system will be fully replaced and up-graded to meet current efficiency ratings.

## 7 NOISE

### 7.1

The accompanying Environmental Noise Impact Report, prepared by MLM Group, considers noise arising from the proposed external plant, with respect to the existing noise levels in the area.

The survey has been carried out in accordance with the assessment methodology contained in British Standard 4142:2014 Methods for Rating and Assessing Industrial and Commercial Sound.

The report concludes that the noise levels to be emitted from the proposed external condenser units are unlikely to cause adverse impact in accordance with BS4142:2014

## 8 ACCESS

### 8.1

#### **Access**

Both existing stepped front entrances to No. 14 & 15 will be retained. Due to the Grade II \* listing of both properties, achieving a permanent solution for inclusive access is unlikely to be acceptable from a heritage perspective.

The proposed elevation changes to the existing rear modern extension will provide a wider opening for access to the rear of the properties.

Both buildings contain existing lift shafts. Both lifts will be brought back into operation.

All of the sanitary accommodation is located on half landings. Inclusive access to existing WC's and the proposed shower rooms is not possible without extensive modifications to the properties which are unlikely to be considered acceptable from a heritage perspective. However, one of the proposed shower cubicles will be fitted with contrasting grab rails to assist an ambulant disabled user.