

39/41 New Oxford Street,
Heritage and Design Statement.



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An analysis of the site and its fabric and commentary on proposed alterations .

1. Introduction

This application is submitted on behalf of City and General New Oxford Street LLP for the installation of replacement steel windows at the above property.

By way of background, the author worked as a Design and Conservation Officer for South Team in the Development Planning Services of Westminster City Council from 1998 to 2011 and holds a Master of Science degree in European Urban Conservation from the University of Dundee. She is also a full member of the Institute of Historic Building Conservation (IHBC). During her time at Westminster Council, she acted as lead officer for South Area Planning Team on Theatre applications and initiatives. This work included (but not exclusively) major refurbishments of London Coliseum, Trafalgar Studios (formerly the Whitehall Theatre), Novello, Wyndhams, London Hippodrome, Duke of York's, Noel Coward and the Apollo Victoria.

This report is to assist the building owner with their proposed work. It is not to be used as a guide for structural matters or costs, which are the responsibility of other professionals.

The building is unlisted and lies within the designated heritage asset of the Bloomsbury Conservation area, the local planning authority is Camden Council

Any proposed alterations are to be considered in terms of local and national government policies and at the core of all consent regimes is the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation areas) Act 1990.

The report has been prepared using planning records, on site investigations and online research.

The author does not give consent for any future alterations or amendments to be made by any other parties to this statement.

2. The Building

The site is located within the Bloomsbury Conservation area. The front elevation is four storeys in height and four bays wide, with retail at ground floor and offices to the upper floors. The building was originally built in the 1840's as part of a group, on the south side of New Oxford Street. It was re-fronted in an Art Deco style for the Hackney Furnishing Company in 1927 by architect Harold Baily, its original entrance to the upper floors still survives. The other 1840's buildings within group retain their original detailing. The property has restrained 1930's detailing with four flat pilasters rhythmically spaced across the façade, stretching from first to third floor levels. The windows are original, formed in steel with a very simple design.

3. The Proposal

The proposal is for the replacement of windows from first to third floor levels at the rear and front of the building and two basement windows at the rear. The existing single glazed "Crittal" type steel windows are in a poor condition due to their age.

The new windows are to be formed from double glazed steel. Constructed from W20 sections, all corners will be mitred and welded, finished hot dip galvanized with a colour polyester powder coat. The glazing units will be 16mm thick glass units comprising one pane of 4mm low E glass, 8mm argon gas filled cavity and one pane of 4mm glass. The Vertical pivot casements will be hung on brass friction cups and fitted with satin chrome handle. The top hung casement will be hung on non-projecting steel hinges and fitted with satin chrome pegstay.

A photo of a similar steel unit recently installed at 47 Foley Street is included for reference with this application.

4. Policy Framework

Any proposed alterations to the building must be considered in terms of local and national government policies. At the core of all consent regimes is the Planning (Listed buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

The local authority Camden Council currently consider planning proposals under the Central Government National Policy Framework or NPPF, which came into effect on the 27th March 2012. This replaced almost all of the government's existing published planning policies, statements and guidance and it is a material consideration when determining all applications.

Under the terms of the NPPF the council can continue to give full weight to relevant policies in its Core Strategy, Local Development Framework (LDF) and the London Plan. The policies from the LDF of particular relevance to this statement are DP24 "Securing High Quality Design" and DP25 "Conserving Camden's Heritage".

DP24: developments need to consider:

- a) character, setting, context and the form and scale of neighbouring buildings;
- b) the character and proportions of the existing building, where alterations and extensions are proposed;
- c) the quality of materials to be used

DP25 In order to maintain the character of Camden's conservation areas, the Council will:

- b) only permit development within conservation areas that preserves and enhances the character and appearance of the area;

The NPPF has replaced Planning Policy Statement 5 "Planning and the historic Environment", although the accompanying "Practice Guide", at the

time of writing this letter, may still be used as a guidance document. The section relating to Conserving and enhancing the historic environment of the new NPPF is of most importance to this study.

Policies 126-141 of the NPPF are of particular relevance to the works proposed to this building, with the emphasis on the local authority role in managing change.

Policy 128 sets out how local planning authorities must require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage asset, with the level of detail being proportionate to the asset's importance.

5. Conclusions

The author considers that the character and appearance of the building and its importance to the conservation area has been at the heart of the design for the proposals. Guidance was provided at pre-application stage by Charlie Rose of Camden Council, that a double glazed steel unit might be looked upon more favourably than an initially suggested Upvc replacement unit.

The existing windows have come to the end of their life and their replacements have been designed to ensure that their original character is replicated without harming the building and preserving its contribution to the character and appearance of this part of the conservation area.

The new windows will also greatly improve upon the existing thermal and acoustic performance of the building. The proposals are considered to accord with National policy and the policies of Camden Council.