

**Doubletree by Hilton London – West End
Southampton Row
London WC1B 4BH**



**HERITAGE STATEMENT
Central Atrium Works**

Prepared by:



July 2018

Doubletree by Hilton London – West End

Document History		
Revision	Comments	Date
-	First issue	July 2018

Job no. 3984

File ref. F:\public\3900 SERIES\3984\1.0 - Admin\1.10 - Planning\1.10.1-Reports\HeritageStatement\Heritage Statement - 20180712_v1.docx

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 This Heritage Statement has been prepared by Morrison Design Ltd (MDL) on behalf of Crimson Hotels Ltd, in support of the provision of an internal Atrium to the existing building at 92 Southampton Row, London, WC1B 4BH and to provide additional bedrooms in relation to the current hotel.

1.2 The application site does not benefit from any statutory heritage designation but is within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area.

1.3 Paragraph 128 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2012 sets out the information requirements for determining applications and 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’.

1.4 In response to the NPPF, section 2 of this report identifies the heritage assets which may be affected by the application proposals. Section 3 provides proportionate statements of significance for the heritage assets identified. These are relative to the scale, nature and effect of the proposals.

1.5 Section 4 provides an assessment of the application proposals on the significance of the identified heritage asset based on national, regional and local planning guidance.

2.0 The Heritage Assets

2.1 A heritage asset is defined by the NPPF as:

'A building, monument, site, place, area of landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in the planning decisions because of its heritage interest. Heritage asset includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing'1).

Designated Heritage Assets

2.2 A Designated Heritage Asset is identified by the NPPF as:

'A World Heritage Site, Scheduled Monument, Listed Building, Protected Wreck Site, Registered Park and Garden, Registered Battlefield or Conservation Area designated under the relevant legislation.

Conservation Area

2.3 The Bloomsbury Conservation Area was designated by the Camden Council in 1968 to protect elements of development from the Georgian and earlier area and covers some 160 hectares. The Council have adopted an Appraisal and Management Strategy which was adopted in 2011.

Non-Designated Heritage Assets

2.4 The NPPF identifies that heritage assets not only includes those which are designated (often with statutory protection) but also those assets identified by the local planning authority which could include local listing or buildings of townscape merit. Any such designations, for the purposes of the NPPF, are considered to constitute non-designated heritage assets.

2.5 Camden Council maintains a list of properties which are listed, of which on Old Gloucester Street, there are a number of Grade II and Grade II* listed properties. 43-47 Old Gloucester Street adjoin the latter addition of the hotel built in approximately 2000, and involved the demolition of 40-42 Old Gloucester Street. The majority of the listed buildings to Old Gloucester Street are towards the Queen Square Park and Garden on Queens Square. This includes 25 & 26 both Grade II, and the Grade II* listed Church of St. George the Martyr on Queens Square, all of which front the same road. Adjacent the proposed development is 24, Old Gloucester Street, which was the former St. George the Martyr Girls and Infants School.

3.0 Significance of the Heritage Assets

Significance and Special Interest

3.1 The significance of a heritage asset is defined within the glossary to the NPPF as:

‘The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset’s physical presence, but also from its setting.’

3.2 Conservation Areas are identified if they are of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which should be preserved or enhanced. Historic England has published guidance on the designation of Conservation Areas which provides a framework for identification of those features that form the character and appearance.

Assessment

3.3 The following statements of significance provide an overview of the identified designated and non-designated heritage assets set out in section 2 which may be affected by the application proposals. These are proportionate to the importance of the asset and also the likely impacts of the proposals.

Bloomsbury Conservation Area

3.4 The Council have adopted a Character Appraisal and Management Strategy which sets out an analysis of the character of the conservation area. This has been adopted and is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. The following assessment is drawn from that Appraisal.

Character and Appearance

- 3.5 The conservation area character appraisal notes that the key features of the character and appearance are:
- Sub-area 11 is split into two physically separate areas due to large scale 20th century interventions along Theobald's Road, which fall outside the conservation area.
 - Area is characterized by Queens Square in the north and Red Lion Square in the south.
 - The area is characterized by a mix of commercial and residential uses.
 - The area has a number of formally planned squares comprising landscaped gardens enclosed by cast-iron railings.
 - The townhouses which originally surrounded these have largely been redeveloped in the 19th and 20th centuries.
 - Old Gloucester Street is a busy arterial route which contrasts with the character of the rest of the sub area.
 - The historic buildings to Old Gloucester Street consists of terraces of townhouses.
 - Where later 19th and 20th century buildings have been developed on larger footprints they generally provide continuous frontages.
- 3.7 The area of the proposed works is within the confines of the existing hotel site and are not visible from Old Gloucester Street. The existing building is partially visible from the adjacent properties to the rear of Old Gloucester Street.

4.0 Impact of Application Proposals

- 4.1 The heritage legal and planning policy relevant to the consideration of the application proposals includes the statutory duties of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, national policy set out in the NPPF as well as regional and local policy for the historic environment
- 4.2 The significance of the designated and non-designated heritage assets that may be affected by the application proposals has, as required by the NPPF, been set out in section 3 of this report.
- 4.3 The NPPF requires local planning authorities to identify and assess the particular significance of heritage assets that may be affected by proposals (paragraph 129). They should take the assessment into account when considering the impact of proposals in order to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposals.
- 4.4 Account should be taken of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation, the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality, and the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness (paragraph 131)
- 4.5 When considering the impact of proposals on the significance of designated heritage assets, the NPPF requires (paragraph 132) that great weight should be given to their conservation and the more important the asset the greater the weight should be.
- 4.6 Local planning authorities are also encouraged to look for opportunities for new development within conservation areas and the setting of heritage assets to enhance or better reveal their significance. According to paragraph 137, proposals that preserve those elements of setting that make a positive contribution to or better reveal the significance of a heritage asset should be treated favourably.
- 4.7 Paragraph 135 of the NPPF concerns the effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset and should be taken into account when considering development proposals with a balanced judgement being required to have regard to the scale of any harm or loss against the significance of the asset.

The Proposals

- 4.8 The application proposals comprise:

'Infilling of existing lightwell and formation of 6 storey Atrium extending natural daylight into the reception area of the existing Hotel with the reorientation and enlargement of existing guestrooms and the creation of 19nr additional guest rooms. The Atrium will be glazed at roof level and to the north eastern elevation.

- 4.9 The key heritage consideration in the determination of this application will be on the character and appearance of the conservation area.

Demolition of existing light well external Walls

- 4.10 The existing area of the lightwell within the building does not benefit from any statutory protection. The demolition works form part of the refurbishment and alterations to form the internal Atrium, within an existing building and should be considered acceptable.

Impact of Application Proposals

Indirect effects – Conservation Areas

- 4.11 The proposed development would only be visible from very limited parts of the conservation area and in any such views, there would be an appreciation of the design quality of the application proposals which would be an improvement on the existing situation.
- 4.12 The design of the proposed development has been informed by a study of similar Atrium within a wider context with the introduction of this element as a contemporary addition to the existing building.

4.13 ***London Plan (2015)***

This statement demonstrates that the application proposals that could be affected have been identified and their significance assessed. The proposals will ensure that the heritage values of the surrounding area are preserved and, in the case of the 'Buildings of Townscape Merit' will be enhanced through a carefully designed and high-quality proposal. The proposal is therefore in accordance with paragraph 7.8 of the London Plan.

4.14 **Local Planning Policy**

The application proposals respond to the local planning policy context and in accordance with Policy CS8 of the Core Strategy ensures that the application proposals will preserve and, in the case of the 'Buildings of Townscape Merit, enhance local distinctiveness of the Borough.

5.0 Conclusion

- 5.1 In accordance with paragraph 128 of the NPPF, the significance of the designated and non-designated heritage assets which could be affected by the application proposals have been described and have informed the evolution and development of the proposals.