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Flat 9 23-24 Great James Street,
London, WC1N 3ES
Planning, Design and Access
Statement

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Contents Amendment Record

This report has been issued and amended as follows:

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Contents

1	Introduction	4
2	Site Location and Description	4
3	Relevant Planning History.....	5
4	Planning Policy.....	6
5	Planning Considerations.....	10
6	Conclusion.....	20

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Planning Insight has been appointed by the applicant, Mr Li, to submit a planning application to the London Borough of Camden to propose the “erection of a partial roof extension, enclosure of the rear roof terrace and internal layout alterations”.
- 1.2 Full planning permission is sought for these proposed works.

2 Site Location and Description

- 2.1 The application site is situated in the London Borough of Camden in the Holborn and St Pancras ward.
- 2.2 The property is a Grade II listed Georgian terrace located on the western side of Great James Street. The building is five storeys with a mansard roof and is prominent in views along Northington Street as it meets Great James Street. The site is within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area and in an area with excellent examples of Georgian town houses in London.

3 Relevant Planning History

3.1 A search of Camden online planning database for the Application Site identified relevant applications. These include the following:

- **2013/6045/P - Erection of extension at 4th floor roof level, including additional roof terrace at 5th floor level, to existing residential flat (Class C3) - Refused January 2014.**
- **2013/1773/P - Erection of extension at roof level to existing residential flat at 26 Great James Street - Granted June 2013.**
- **LS9904260 - Change of use from office to residential use, including internal alterations, demolition of a toilet block, flat roof extension at the rear and external alterations. Granted April 1999.**

4 Planning Policy

4.1 This section of the Statement provides an analysis of the planning policy context in which the proposed development should be considered in accordance with the relevant planning legislation and national policy guidance.

4.2 Planning decisions in England and Wales should be taken in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. This statutory requirement is set out in Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY

National Planning Policy Framework (2012)

4.3 On 27th March 2012, the government adopted the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The document provides a consolidated framework of planning policy which replaces most of the previous national Planning Policy Statements and Planning Policy Guidance Notes.

4.4 The NPPF outlines the presumption in favour of sustainable development. It further states that permission should be granted for development where a plan is absent, silent, indeterminate or where relevant policies are out of date.

4.5 The framework indicates that proposed development that accords with an up-to-date Local Plan should be approved, and proposed development that conflicts should be refused unless other material considerations indicate otherwise. The NPPF constitutes a material consideration in determining applications.

Design

- 4.6 Planning decisions should not attempt to impose architectural styles or particular tastes and they should not stifle innovation, originality or initiate through unsubstantiated requirements to conform to certain development forms or styles.
- 4.7 Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development and should contribute positively to making places better for people. Planning decisions should ensure that developments:
- **Function well and add to the overall quality of the area;**
 - **Establish a strong sense of place, using streetscape and buildings to create an attractive and comfortable place to live, work and visit;**
 - **Optimise the potential of the site to accommodate development;**
 - **Respond to local character and history, and reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials;**
 - **Create safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder, and fear of crime, do not undermine quality of life or community cohesion;**
 - **Are visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping;**

National Planning Practice Guidance (2014)

- 4.8 The Government launched the Planning Practice Guidance web-based resource in March 2014.
- 4.9 Paragraph 001 of Design states that as a core planning principle, plan-makers and decision takers should always seek to secure high quality design.

LOCAL PLANNING POLICY

Camden Local Plan 2017

- 4.10 The Council adopted its Local Plan in 2017.
- 4.11 Policy G1 – “Delivery of Growth” aims to achieve sustainable development through a number of objectives including avoiding or minimising impacts of development upon the environment and making efficient use of land.
- 4.12 Policy A1 – “Managing the impact of development” seeks to protect the quality of life of occupiers and neighbours against unacceptable harm to amenity.
- 4.13 Policy D1 – “Design” requires development to meet minimum standards in design, respecting local context and preserving the historic environment.
- 4.14 Policy D2 – “Heritage” seeks to preserve and enhance Camdens heritage assets.

Camden Planning Guidance “Amenity”

- 4.15 This guidance provides additional information relating to appropriate minimum distances between habitable rooms directly facing one another.

Camden Planning Guidance “Design”

- 4.16 This guidance provides additional information relating to the design quality needed for development in Camden.

5 Planning Considerations

Principle for Development

- 5.1 The primary considerations for assessment of this proposal are the impact it would have on the listed building, the impact on the conservation area and any harm to amenity.
- 5.2 Extending the existing footprint of the residential unit to incorporate the balcony floor area will have minimal impact on heritage assets or amenity.
- 5.3 As it stands the balcony space available is not sufficiently large to be used effectively in relation to the living space of the unit. Enclosure of the balcony will allow for the area to be used more effectively, benefiting the occupants. The efficient use of land is supported by Policy G1 of the Local Plan.
- 5.4 It is proposed that alternating central panels of the proposed rear fenestration will slide open to allow for circulation and to maintain an element of openness. The large glazed area will maximise the natural light available to the living area of the unit. The skylight and fire staircase, which replace the external spiral fire staircase on the balcony, will serve a dual purpose by also bringing natural light further into the open plan living space.
- 5.5 The alterations to the layout of the flat, moving the bathroom facilities away from the rear, gives the living space more coherence and access to exterior. This represents a significant improvement in the design of the property. These alterations are in line with Policy D1 of the Local Plan 2017 and the CPG “Design”, improving the quality of existing residential space.

Design and Heritage

- 5.6 The design submitted represents a modern, high quality design approach which improves upon the cluttered and busy rear of the existing building.
- 5.7 The historic roof extension which provides the residential unit is not original to the listed building and presents a pattern of fenestration and fixtures which are not in keeping with the rest of the rear elevation.
- 5.8 The rear elevations of this group of listed buildings have been significantly compromised by past development and are considered to be of very limited heritage value. The works proposed therefore do not represent a substantial harm to a heritage asset, which complies with Policy D2 “Heritage” of the Local Plan.
- 5.9 While the proposal does reduce the private amenity space of the residential unit the quality of that amenity space is low, comprising a narrow balcony with 2.25 sqm spiral staircase at one end. The loss of this low quality amenity space is justified by the improvement to the accommodation proposed. The central panes across the width of the rear elevation will also be upward sliding sash windows, allowing the living area to open substantially opened up during summer months.
- 5.10 The proposal complies with Policies D1 “Design” and D2 “Heritage” of the Local Plan. It respects the character of the existing building and improved upon the insensitive existing appearance. The details and materials are of high quality which will complement the host building. It also represents a significant increase in the quality of the accommodation. No substantial harm to a heritage asset will result from the development.

Amenity

- 5.11 The proposed extension will have no additional impact on amenity.
- 5.12 The windows directly facing the terrace are not in residential use and as such the 18m separation required under the Camden Planning Guidance “Amenity” is not relevant.
- 5.13 It should also be noted that in the case of any overlooking concerns that the proposed extension has no worse impact than the existing roof terrace.

6 Conclusion

- 6.1 The applicant believes that the proposal accords with the national and local planning policies and as such should be permitted. The site will significantly improve the accommodation and have minimal impact on heritage assets and amenity.
- 6.2 The proposal represents a modest alteration to the existing building, which is sustainable and well designed. We therefore request that permission be granted.