

Application reference: 2018/4724/INVALID

18th October 18

Planning Department
London Borough of Camden
2nd Floor, 5 Pancras Square
C/O Town Hall
Judd Street
London
WC1H 9JE

Dear John,

Design And Access Statement Revised

Montague Hotel, 15 Montague Street, Camden, WC1B 5BJ. Application for Planning Permission and Listed Building Consent

Thank you for your letter dated 1st October 2017. We have emailed you separately about points 1, 2 and 3 relating to drawings. This letter is to address the additional air conditioning unit.

Breezefree Ltd been instructed by Red Carnation Hotels to submit applications for planning permission and listed building consent for:

“Erection of fixed wooden framed enclosure at ground floor level to the rear of the building and an additional air conditioning unit.”

The application comprises the following:

- Completed application form for Planning and Listed Building Consent; Covering letter including Design and
- Access/Heritage Statement;
- Site location plan
- Drawing 50581_4A_MontagueGdns_PLANNING.pdf;

Given the nature of the proposals in this instance, we have set out our Design and Access/Heritage Statement letter. In preparing this assessment we have visited the site; reviewed the application drawings; and had regard to local, regional and national policy, guidance and legislation.



HERITAGE DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

The Application Site

The application site is located on Montague Street, within the constituency of the London Borough of Camden.



Figure 1 – Montague Hotel Red Line Plan

Context

The Montague Hotel forms part of an 1800s terrace, developed by the Bedford Estate. The properties are of four storeys in height with a continuous parapet and are built in a yellow stock brick with a continuous band at third-floor sill level and a rusticated stucco ground floor and basement level. Montague Hotel is located on the east side of the street. A rectangular private communal garden to the rear of the hotel separates the buildings on Montague Street from those on Bedford Place.

The east side of Montague Street is characterised by a number of sizeable hotels, whilst many of the remaining properties on both sides of the street remain in residential use.

Montague Hotel is located within the southern portion of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area and is Grade II listed, with the description as follows:

“Numbers 12-26 and attached railings including Montague Hotel (Numbers 12-20). Terrace of 18 houses. C1803-6. By James Burton. Built by WE Allen, altered. Yellow stock bricks with stucco ground floors. Stucco sill band at 3rd floor level. Nos. 15-17 and Nos. 22 and 23 slightly projecting. Gateway to rear gardens (qv) between Nos. 20 and 21. 4 storeys and basements. 3 windows each. Round-arched doorways with reeded door frames or sidelights, mostly 2-leaf doors; Nos. 17, 20, 21, 22, 24, 25, 27, 28 and 29 with patterned fanlights. No.13, door replaced by window. No.19 with mosaic top doorstep with words “White Hall”. Gauged brick flat arches to recessed sash windows, most with original glazing bars. Nos. 18, 19 and 20 with glazing bars forming patterns of octagons, squares and ladders, to sides of panes, on ground and 1st floor. Nos. 21 and 22 with patterned glazing bars to ground floor and No.26 to 1st floor. 1st floor windows with cast-iron balconies. Parapets. Rear elevations of Nos. 25-29 with bowed bays. INTERIORS: not inspected. SUBSIDIARY FEATURES: attached cast- iron railings with urn finials to areas”.

The rear of the hotel has undergone a series of alterations, with a number of later additions in connection with the hotel use that are of less significance than the original features of the building.



The Application Additionally Proposes

There is no air conditioning unit at present on the flat roof to service the existing area which is covered by a retractable awning.

The proposals are to provide the hotel with an enclosure that can be used at all times whether the weather is good or poor, providing the hotel with an additional area. The hotel is a community facility. However, this application is not for the delivery of a community facility, rather its purpose is to ensure that the hotel is retained and able to trade competitively, by providing dining and bar areas that are comfortable for customers in all weathers and seasons.

The works in question are on a flat roof that is not intended to be publicly accessible, so Universal Access is not relevant to this proposal.

Planning History

Additionally Planning Permission and Listed Building Consent were granted on 29 November 2017 under reference 2017/5207/L:

“Installation of a replacement retractable awning and of retractable glazed perimeter screens”

The Council considered these proposals to preserve the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and setting of the Listed Building.

Relevant Legislation and Policy

Statutory Provisions

Section 66 (1) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 says that:

“In considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.”

Section 72(1) of the same act states, in respect of Conservation Areas, that:

“In the exercise, with respect to any buildings or other land in a conservation area, of any functions under or by virtue of any of the provisions mentioned in subsection (2), special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.”

“Preserving” has been defined by the Courts to be the avoidance of harm.

Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework

Paragraph 128 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires applications to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected by development proposals. The level of detail should be proportionate to an asset's importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on its significance.

The NPPF goes on to note at **paragraph 137** that:

“Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to or better reveal the significance of the asset should be treated favourably.”

The NPPF (2012) defines significance 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.'

Planning Permission and Listed Building Consent were granted on 25 March 2015 under reference 2014/7799/L and 2014/7712/P:

"Installation of a raised deck to the rear, associated alterations to rear fenestration, relocation of air conditioning unit and installation of retractable awning."

The London Plan

In accordance with **Policy 7.8 (Heritage assets and archaeology)** of the London Plan (2016), development should identify, value, conserve, restore, re-use and incorporate heritage assets, where appropriate. It further states that: *"Development affecting heritage assets and their settings should conserve their significance, by being sympathetic to their form, scale, materials and architectural detail."*

Camden's Local Plan 2017

The relevant Local Planning Authority for this application is Royal Borough of Camden.

Policy D1 Design sets out a series of criteria (a-o) for development, not all of which are relevant to the proposals. Those that are relevant are stated below:

December 4, 2014 Page 4 *"The Council will seek to secure high quality design in development. The Council will require that development:*

- a. respects local context and character;*
- b. preserves or enhances the historic environment and heritage assets in accordance with "Policy D2 Heritage";*
- e. comprises details and materials that are of high quality and complement the local character;*
- j. responds to natural features and preserves gardens and other open space;*

Policy D2 Heritage States in respect of conservation areas:

The Council will:

- e. require that development within conservation areas preserves or, where possible, enhances the character or appearance of the area;*

And in respect of listed buildings states:

To preserve or enhance the borough's listed buildings, the Council will:

- j. resist proposals for a change of use or alterations and extensions to a listed building where this would cause harm to the special architectural and historic interest of the building; and*
- k. resist development that would cause harm to significance of a listed building through an effect on its setting.*

The statutory development plan is the Adopted Camden LDF Core Strategy and Development Policies which sets out the vision, objectives, and detailed spatial strategy for future development in the Borough up until 2025.

Policy CS14 concerns the promotion of high quality places and the conservation of our heritage, and confirms that the Council will ensure that Camden's places and buildings are attractive, safe and easy to use, subject to meeting a number of criteria that require development to be of a high standard of design that respects local context and character and preserves and enhances heritage assets.

Policy DP24 seeks to secure high quality design, and confirms that the Council will require all developments, including alterations and extensions to existing buildings to be of the highest standard of design this includes the appropriate location for building services equipment.



The Camden Planning Guidance which was adopted in 2011 is also relevant. Paragraphs 11.6 and 11.7 of Chapter 11 confirm that:

“In refurbished development, plant and machinery should be accommodated within the building structure, or incorporated into the design of external modifications.

Other design considerations for building services equipment include:

- *screening or other techniques to minimise the impacts of plant, machinery and ducting must, in themselves, not cause visual blight;*
- *plant and machinery on roofs should not be visible from the street, public vantage points or from immediately adjacent buildings;*
 - *The design and materials used for plant, machinery and ducting, as well as for ancillary structures such as screening, where located on the exterior of the building, must be consistent with those of the building; and*
 - *Where possible, plant and machinery should be designed in such a way that does not lead to issues of safety and security”.*

Paragraph 11.8 considers amenity and confirms that where ducting, plant or machinery are required on the outside of a building they must not obscure access to daylight and sunlight, or provide any nuisance for occupants of the development or adjacent buildings.

Changes in the law regarding smoking, along with changing attitudes to drink driving and the health implications of excessive alcohol consumption mean that offering food is vital for public houses to remain viable and continue to trade. This has driven the recent refurbishment of the Montague Hotel, with the creation of the dining areas on the first floor. As part of this refurbishment the A/C has been improved and upgraded, as

The London Plan offers support for the proposed development in Policy 4.6. stating *...The Mayor will and boroughs and other stakeholders should support the continued success of London’s diverse range of arts, cultural, professional sporting and entertainment enterprises and the cultural, social and economic benefits that they offer to its residents, workers and visitors...*

Both local and national level policies give clear support to the continuance of the Montague Hotel as a hotel. None of these policies indicate that planning permission should not be granted.

Character of the Conservation Area

English Heritage’s 2008 Conservation Principles seeks to provide guidance on the sustainable management of the historic environment, and defines policy on the assessment of significance. This document aims to prompt thought about significance through a consideration of the values that might be ascribed to a place, and proposes four broad groups intended to guide comprehensive assessment of those values.

The Bloomsbury Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy (2011) recognises that Bloomsbury is widely considered to be an internationally significant example of a planned 17th and 18th century urban environment. The quintessential character of the Conservation Area derives from the grid of streets enclosed by mainly three and four storey buildings and has a distinct urban character of broad streets interspaced by formal squares, which provide landscape, dominated focal points.

Due to the size and complexity of the Conservation Area, it has been sub-divided into a series of character areas. Montague Hotel falls within sub-area 6 – Bloomsbury Square/Russell Square/Tavistock Square – an area largely characterised by its three and four storey late 18th and 19th century terraces, surrounding a sequence of linked formal spaces. There is a strong consistency in the architectural vocabulary of the original terraced development and the architectural and historical importance is reflected in their listing, mostly at grade II.



Montague Street is identified within the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy as an area of uniform townscape with a high sense of enclosure created by the 1800s terraces on its east and west sides, all of which are listed grade II. A strong visual consistency is derived from the repeated identical frontages.

The Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy identifies a general approach to maintaining the special interest of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area. As part of this strategy it states that:

“Applications for development will be determined having regard to the special interest of the Conservation Area and the specialist advice of conservation officers”.

Assessment of the Proposals

In regard to the above information and policy context, it is our view that the proposals within this application will preserve the significance of the heritage asset and its setting within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area.

The proposals represent a low key addition to the property set between two later additions that are in a conservatory style. The proposals will have a minimal impact upon the existing fabric of the listed building, as they simply requiring fixing to the outside of this later addition. The development will not interfere with the original fabric of the listed building and will not cause harm to its special interest by virtue of its location, and its modest size and scale.

From the gardens, the structure is largely screened from view by the existing boundary wall and landscaping, and the cornice to the top outward facing perimeter of the structure will be in keeping with the later addition conservatories, limiting its visual impact.

There is no landscaping associated with the application for an air conditioning unit.

The existing access arrangements to the application site will remain unaltered.

Furthermore, it is our view that the proposals represent an improvement to the overall function of the building that will benefit the use of the space, allowing more accessible seating, improving amenity for residents of the hotel.

Conclusions

Having regard to the character and appearance of the conservation area and the setting of the listed building we are of the view that the proposals will preserve the significance of the heritage assets. This outcome will be achieved through the siting, scale and use of appropriate materials. We therefore also conclude the proposals are compliant with adopted planning policy and fulfil the tests set out in legislation.

Both local and national level policies give clear support to the continuance of the Montague Hotel as a public house. The installation of the proposed A/C and cellar condensers will make an important contribution to the viability of the Montague Hotel, ensuring that it is able to continue to trade. No policies or other material considerations indicate that planning permission should not be granted to this proposal.

This proposed development is therefore commended to the Royal Borough of Camden.

We trust that you will find the above a satisfactory assessment of the proposals from a heritage point-of-view, but should you have any further queries please do not hesitate to contact Daniel Bevis (daniel.bevis@breezefree.com) at our office.

Yours faithfully,

Breezefree

Breezefree Ltd

