

Response to Neighbour Comments Regarding Heritage Matters

7ABC Bayham Street, Camden

Introduction

1. This note has been prepared by Heritage Collective on behalf of the applicant, Camden Lifestyle (UK) Ltd. to respond to comments made during the planning application for proposals for the redevelopment of 7ABC Bayham Street (LPA Ref: 2018/3647/P).
2. The main concern raised relates to the effects of the demolition and redevelopment of 7ABC Bayham Street on the character and appearance of Camden Town Conservation Area, as outlined within the representation from Fuller Long (6 November 2018). Their letter concludes that the proposed redevelopment of 7ABC Bayham Street would result in harm to the conservation area for the following reasons:
 - i. 7b makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area; and
 - ii. The height, bulk, massing and detailed design of the proposed replacement development fails to respond to the surrounding historic context.
3. These conclusions are in contrast to our assessment within the Heritage Statement submitted as part of the application and a response to these points is provided below.

Demolition of 7B Bayham Street

4. As per paragraph 5 of the original Heritage Statement the status of the existing buildings on the site as positive contributors to the conservation area was given

specific consideration by the council during the pre-application stage of the application. Research was carried out into the history of the site to understand its development and the level of alteration that has occurred over time. 7b is identified by Fuller Long as appearing to “*retain its original form and appearance*” (paragraph 1). This is incorrect. As demonstrated by a report produced by Andrew Hart for the former owner, the existing appearance of the front elevation dates to the mid-1980s. At this time a new bay window was introduced and a door from the street was removed.

5. Contrary to the assertion of Fuller Long, the gable end of 7b Bayham Street was not designed to match that of 9b Bayham Street which is also a later addition to the building, not present in a photograph from the mid-1980s (Figure 1). The architectural interest attributed to the building by Fuller Long due to its rusticated front elevation and six over six sash windows, which are a late 20th century intervention, is not there. The 1980s insertions have confused an understanding of the evolution of the street scene.



Figure 1: Photograph of 7ABC Bayham Street c.mid 1980's provided by Andrew Hart

6. The assessment provided in the original Heritage Statement regarding the architectural and historic interest of the buildings on the application site was based on their altered and relatively plain appearance. It is acknowledged that there was a light industrial function to the site and that one of the many uses of the building was for a piano string company, however the buildings were also used by a cabinet maker, lace paper company, engineering company, Holloway Dolls Accessories and as a Rug Weavers. Its historic interest cannot solely be attributed to the piano industry which was just one use of the building at a time in the early 20th century when the association with this industry within the area was declining.
7. Our assessment stands, that the buildings on the site do not contribute to the character and appearance of the conservation area as they are light industrial buildings of no particular architectural or historic interest. This was also the view of the conservation officer during the pre-application process when the research was presented on a site visit to the buildings.
8. The buildings on the application site are not considered to make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area due to their plain style, altered state and only loose association with the piano industry. This assessment was agreed by the local authorities Principal Heritage Officer who stated he believed the buildings to make a neutral contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area. Their loss would not result in any harm to the character and appearance of the conservation area and therefore as long as the design of the new building preserves heritage significance, discussed below, the proposals are in compliance with legislation and national and local policy, as identified within the original Heritage Statement. Section 72 (1) of the 1990 "Act" would not be contravened by the demolition of these buildings. This is an assessment shared with Camden Council, which accepts the removal of the buildings on the site.

Proposed Replacement Building

9. The representation by Fuller Long states that the character of Bayham Street is of buildings of three to four storeys and therefore the proposed height of 7ABC Bayham Street is out of keeping with residential buildings in the conservation area. While it is acknowledged that the proposed development would be an increase on the existing heights of the buildings at the application site, this has been given

careful consideration to respond to the existing character of the buildings along Bayham Street, especially to the south of the site, which includes the six storey approved developments at Bayham Place and Koko. Whether Fuller Long find these approved buildings acceptable or not, it is the case that the proposed building would be no taller than approved heights in the area.

10. It is suggested by Fuller Long that the design is out of keeping with the street scene as it does not reference the historic residential properties. As explained within the Design and Access Statement that accompanied the application, the design has evolved through discussion with the Design Review Panel and the local authority conservation officer. The design references the adjacent town houses through its vertical emphasis, the symmetrical appearance of the front elevation and the consistent build line. It is acknowledged that the proposed new building is taller than neighbouring 1, 3 and 5 Bayham Street, but this height has been dealt with sensitively by referencing the light industrial use of the application site in the materiality, design of the fenestration and roof extension. This style was adopted to accommodate a larger building on the site that would not compete with the residential scale and character of 1, 3 and 5 Bayham Street. It is an honest solution to the plot size and location, rather than attempting to create a halfway house or pastiche design of buildings appearing as a terrace when in fact they are a larger, single building.
11. The frontage of the building has been given a strong design aesthetic to ensure it complements the continuous build line of the street. The design has ensured it responds to the heights of the buildings adjacent by a strong horizontal emphasis at third floor level. Both 1, 3, 5 Bayham Street and 9b Bayham Street's roof treatments rise above third storey level, showing additional height above three storeys can be accommodated in this area. The additional height of the proposed fourth and set back fifth storey respond to the heights of buildings adjacent to the site in Bayham Place (six storeys), Koko (six storeys) and at 10-12 Camden High Street (six storeys) which can be seen in existing views to the application site. The additional height, bulk and mass of the building is not out of keeping with the existing character of the street scene and clearly references the commercial character of this area.

12. Careful consideration was given to the new building to ensure it complemented the architectural detailing and historic character of the adjacent townhouses, but was not a pastiche. It is not considered that to complement the street scene the new building must replicate what is existing. Instead it was proposed to draw on the history of the site, character of the area and the emerging street scene to inform the design of the new building.
13. At paragraph 15 of Fuller Long's representation it states the proposed development would "*detract from the coherent scale of the surrounding context.*" This fails to acknowledge the existing and emerging townscape following approvals of extensions at Bayham Place and Koko and the visibility of the built form of 10-12 Camden High Street which is clearly currently visible when looking at the application site from Bayham Street. As discussed in the original Heritage Statement, Design and Access Statement and above, the additional height of the building has been dealt with sensitively responding to both the scale of the immediately surrounding buildings and the increased height of approved buildings to the street scene to the southern end of Bayham Street.
14. A further concern to the proposed massing of the building is regarding "*the application of the design across it [the site] creates an incongruous sense of scale within the street scene.*" However, a typical feature of Bayham Street is the continuous build line. There are no spaces between properties and to include gaps on the site would undermine this strong characteristic of the built form along Bayham Street.
15. The proposed massing of the building has given consideration to the surrounding buildings by stepping back from the southern elevation, closest to King's Mews. Additionally, the step back to the fifth storey and the material treatment will minimise the effect of the additional height to the building when seen from Bayham Street and King's Mews.
16. As part of the design process the new building has been detailed to reflect the historic light industrial use of the application site. This was done following extensive discussion with the council, analysis of the site, surrounding area and characteristics of the conservation area. The main concern of Fuller Long in relation to the proposed design is that it does not respond to the residential

character of the street. However, this was deliberately intended to ensure the new building did not appear as a pastiche of the adjacent town houses. It was specifically designed to respond to the commercial character of the conservation area in which it is located and to reference the former use of the site.

17. There will be a change to the views along Kings Mews, but this is already being altered by the proposed new building at Bayham Place as shown by plate 9 of the Heritage Statement (Figure 2 below).



Figure 2: View to the application site from King's Mews facing south

18. The design of the new building has been articulated and stepped back in order to respond to concerns regarding the change in views to residents in King Street Mews. From a heritage perspective, as identified within the representation by Fuller Long, the mews has an “*enclosed character*” and this will not be affected by the new development. The housing along this road was originally intended to serve the buildings along Bayham Street and Camden High Street and are intended to be of a smaller and more simplistic character and scale than those

found along Bayham Street. It should not be expected that the new development should be in keeping with the scale of these buildings. Their setting is partly defined by the enclosed character of the road and their historic association with the buildings on Bayham Street. This will be entirely unaffected by the proposed development which is capable of preserving the significance of this street.

Summary

19. As agreed at pre-application stage the existing buildings on site do not contribute to the character and appearance of the conservation area. The buildings are of limited architectural and historic interest as described in the original Heritage Statement. Further the representation by Fuller Long that 7b Bayham Street retains its original appearance is erroneous as demonstrated by the 1980s alterations to the building.
20. The loss of the existing buildings on the application site will not result in any harm to the character and appearance of the conservation area and are compliant with local policy D2. The test is therefore whether the replacement building will preserve the character and appearance of the conservation area as per Section 72(1) of the 1990 Planning Act.
21. Using a contemporary design with traditional materials the new building will complement the street scene rather than providing a pastiche of the existing town houses along Bayham Street. It will provide a clear contrast between old and new along the street. The high quality of the design, informed by discussion with the council at pre-application stage and taken to the Design Review Panel, will preserve the character and appearance of the conservation area, whilst vastly improving the efficiency and viability of the site. There will be no harm to Camden Town Conservation Area and paragraphs 195-196 of the NPPF are not engaged. The proposed works are in accordance with local policies D1 and D2.