

MR/P7423
26 April 2019

Planning and Development
London Borough of Camden
Town Hall
Argyle Street
London
WC1H 8ND

Dear Sirs

57-59 MONMOUTH STREET, LONDON, WC2H 9DG

APPLICATION FOR LISTED BUILDING CONSENT FOR INTERNAL ALTERATIONS AND REFURBISHMENT OF THE EXISTING RETAIL UNITS AT 57-59 MONMOUTH STREET, COMPRISING ALTERATIONS TO MODERN STAIRCASE, REINSTATEMENT OF INTERNAL DIVIDING WALL, REMOVAL OF MODERN PARTITIONS AND RECONFIGURATION OF UTILITY EQUIPMENT

PLANNING PORTAL REF: PP- 07781975

On behalf of our client Shaftesbury Covent Garden Ltd, we write in support of an application for listed building consent for various internal alterations and refurbishment works to the existing retail unit located at ground and basement level of 57-59 Monmouth Street, London, WC2.

In support of the application and for the Council's consideration, the following documents have been submitted electronically online via the Planning Portal:

- Application Forms – prepared by Rolfe Judd Planning
- Existing and Proposed Drawings – prepared by Fresson and Tee Architects

Accordingly, no application fee is required as part of an application for listed building consent.

Site Location and Existing Use

The site is located along the eastern side of Monmouth Street within Seven Dials. This application relates solely to the basement and ground floor levels of the four storey building at 57-59 Monmouth Street. The building currently comprises retail use (Class A1) at basement and ground floor and a flexible use for either offices (Class B1) or residential (Class C3) on the upper floors. The ground floor shopfronts are accessed from Monmouth Street and the upper floors are accessed from the rear in Ching Court.

The property is recognised as being Grade II Listed (list entry 1322125) and is located within Seven

Architecture Planning Interiors

Old Church Court, Claylands Road, The Oval, London SW8 1NZ

DD 020 7556 1500
E markr@rolfe-judd.co.uk

T 020 7556 1500
www.rolfe-judd.co.uk

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Dials (Covent Garden) Conservation Area. Historic England describes the building as follows:

"A terrace of C18 houses and C19 houses, restored and in part remodelled 1983-5 by the Terry Farrell Partnership as part of the regeneration of Comyn Ching Triangle."

The Seven Dials (Covent Garden) Conservation Area Statement adds that:

"Monmouth Street runs north to south through Seven Dials. It retains some 17th century; Nos.14,16,18,21,27,61-63, and 18th century buildings; Nos.35,37,39, 42- 50, 53-55, 57-59, 65-71. At the southern end is the Comyn Ching Triangle. The site was owned by Comyn Ching & Co (est.1723) an entirely British architectural ironmongers who retained a showroom at Nos.15-21 Shelton Street until July 1995. The 'triangle' which is bounded by Mercer Street, Shelton Street and Monmouth Street is a good example of the changing character and vitality of Covent Garden."

The Grade II listed 53-59 Monmouth Street was first listed in 1973 and received amendment on 16th March 2017. Notwithstanding the amendment, the buildings remained Grade II listed. The buildings form a terrace of 18th and 19th century houses which were restored and remodelled in 1983-5 by the Terry Ferrell Partnership as part of the wider regeneration of Comyn Ching Triangle. Whilst the building is recognised as being listed, its heritage value is attributed to the external appearance of the building as a row of historic terraces and the wider setting and character of the conservation area. Indeed, this was noted by the Council in the most recent listed building consent (March 2018), with the officer stating that:

"The internal rear stair and associated detail is a replica of the 18th century stair seen in other properties; other internal details date to the mid 1980s following the Farrell's regeneration scheme. Much of the original 18th and 19th century detailing has been lost."

Relevant Planning History

As noted above, the premises formed part of an extensive redevelopment / refurbishment scheme during the late 1970's and on into the 1980's by the architect Sir Terry Farrell. Those redevelopment schemes are recognised as comprising of four separate proposals (some which are interlinked) –

- 1977 Comyn Ching Scheme
- 1980 Comyn Ching Scheme
- 1980 Seven Dials Housing Co-operative Scheme
- 1981 Comyn Ching Scheme (planning permission ref. P14/58/A/31554/R1 and HB/2564/R1)

The final scheme, 1981 Comyn Ching Scheme, is recognised as being implemented and as built out – 'the Terry Farrell scheme' – and is referred to as part of the listed building description. As part of this implemented scheme, planning permission and historic building consent was granted on 4th November 1981 for the following works:

"Rehabilitation of existing buildings (45-71 Monmouth Street, 19-31 Mercer Street, 1-21 Shelton Street) and construction of two new buildings to provide residential, retail and office uses".

The scheme was split into three phases, of which the application site 53-55 Monmouth Street formed part of Phase 1. This is confirmed as part of the Section 53 Agreement which noted that Phase 1 was to include the "retail and office rehabilitation of 53-63 Monmouth Street and the retail and residential

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rehabilitation of 11-19 Shelton Street”.

Having reviewed the Council’s online planning database, a number of application have been granted consent. Those of relevant are detailed below:

- 2018 February – “Listed building consent for internal and external alterations associated with change of use of first to third floors from office (Class B1) to alternative uses, either as 3x2 bed self-contained residential units (Class C3) or office (Class B1) uses. Alterations include new vents, secondary glazing and associated internal alterations” (ref. 2017/1261/L)
- 2011 March – “Internal and external alterations associated with change of use of first to third floors from office (Class B1) to alternative uses, either as 3x2 bed self-contained residential units (Class C3) or office (Class B1) uses. Alterations include new vents, secondary glazing and associated internal alterations” (ref. 2010/6172/L & 2010/6158/P).

No relevant planning history is available on the Councils online record for the basement and ground level floors.

Proposal

The proposals seek internal works to amend the configuration of the basement and ground floors. For the avoidance of doubt, no external works are proposed and the façade of the building will remain as existing.

The internal works can be summarised as:

- The careful removal of the modern timber stairs at basement and ground floor level, with the floor reinstated to match;
- A new opening formed in the floor and a new timber staircase to be installed to provide for an improved internal layout;
- The removal of modern partitions at basement level to create a more legible space;
- The removal of a modern partition at ground floor level to unblock an internal window;
- The reinstatement of a new blockwork dividing wall to form two separate units at ground floor level;
- The removal of the security alarm system and associated fittings and the addition of a dedicated electric meter for the ground floor unit within fire rated boxing and a hinged access panel;
- The addition of electric and gas meters, consumer unit and security alarm equipment within the services cupboard at basement level; and
- The addition of a new post at basement level to support the new staircase.

The proposed works would be sensitively undertaken to ensure any existing historic fabric which remains within the building (albeit limited) would not be affected. The proposal seeks alterations to those modern fixtures and fittings which have no historic or architectural significance. The works would instead allow for the simple sub-division of the existing retail unit and re-instate the original plan form of the building’s ground floor.

Please refer to the submitted drawings by Fresson and Tee for further detailed information.

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Policy Considerations

The proposed works are considered supportive of those national and local planning policies and supplementary planning guidance as outlined below.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Paragraph 190 states that local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence. In addition, they should take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal.

NPPF Paragraph 192 states that the Council should, in determining applications, take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses. In addition, Paragraph 194 states that any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification.

Local Plan Policy D2 (Heritage) states the Council will preserve and, where appropriate, enhance designated heritage assets and their settings, including conservation areas and listed buildings. Policy will seek to preserve or enhance the borough's listed buildings and resist proposals for alterations which would cause harm to the special architectural and historic interest of the building.

The proposed works seek the sensitive alteration of the basement and ground floor retail units of 57-59 Monmouth Street. The majority of the works, as demonstrated by the proposed drawings, comprise the removal and replacement of the existing modern timber staircase, the removal of modern stud-partition walls and the addition of a dividing wall between the two units at ground floor level. As detailed as part of the planning history for the building, a number of works and associated listed building consents have been granted permission on the upper floors, involving the creation of additional openings within party walls and the insertion of new partition walls and associated fixtures and fittings. Indeed, it was noted in the officer's report for the most recent listed building consent for the upper floors that much of the original 18th and 19th century detailing has been lost. This notwithstanding, the current proposals do not propose any alterations to the exterior of the building and the façade of the listed terraced housing would remain constant. Against this context, the proposals would see only modest changes to the interior fittings and is not considered to harm the significance of the listed premises, with consideration to national and local policy.

The proposed works include the addition of a new blockwork wall to divide the ground floor into two separate premises. Monmouth Street contains a mixture of retail unit sizes at ground floor level, however the new premises would be commensurate with the size of adjacent premises 53 and 55 Monmouth Street. The works would further allow for the original and historic plan form of the ground floors to be re-instated and create two individual retail units of varying size. Local Plan Policy TC5 (Small and independent shops) outlines that the Council will promote the provision of small shop premises suitable for small and independent business. The Council will encourage the occupation of shops by independent businesses and the provision of affordable premises.

In accordance with Local Plan policy, the proposed alterations will preserve the heritage asset and its original setting, and would not cause harm to any special architectural and historic interest of the building. All works are internal and therefore will not impact upon the established character or

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appearance of the Seven Dials (Covent Garden) Conservation Area.

Conclusion

This application seeks consent for the reconfiguration of the basement and ground floor internal layout at 57-59 Monmouth Street. The proposed works would provide future tenants with two legible, improved retail spaces from which to operate, whilst providing a new and improved staircase location. The proposals are for internal works only and are considered to be modest, with the exterior of the building remaining constant. Against the background, context and significance of the heritage asset, and cognizant of the recent planning history for the site and previous internal alterations, the works will not impact upon the special character or historic fabric of the building.

We trust you will find the submitted information sufficient to validate our client's application and we look forward to a swift and positive outcome. However, should you require any further details please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned.

Yours faithfully

Mark Rattue

For and on behalf of
Rolfe Judd Planning Limited