

First Floor
15 Grape Street
London
WC2H 8DR

PLANNING & HERITAGE STATEMENT

Change of use B1 office to D1 (Aesthetics Clinic)



PREPARED BY
Change the Use

FOR
The Royale Aesthetics Clinic

INTRODUCTION

This planning statement has been prepared by Change the Use on behalf of 'The Royale Aesthetics Clinic ('the Applicant') in support of an application for Full Planning Permission for a change of use of the first floor of 15 Grape Street, London, WC2H 8DR.

The planning application seeks a change of use from B1 (Office) to a D1 (Non-Aesthetics Clinic) at first floor level with the provision of internal alterations.

SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA

The application site is the first-floor unit of a six storey building located within Grape Street.

The property is located within Camden Council. According to the council's proposals map the property falls within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area.

The unit is comprised of a ground and basement floor commercial unit which is currently occupied by a dental surgery. The remaining 4 upper floors are vacant B1 Offices.

The building was previously occupied by the Embassy of Cuba who vacated the building on the 18th December 2014.

The property offers open plan space with a w/c to the rear and a stair case & passenger lift providing access to other separating floors.

There are several public car parks surrounding the application site however the site holds a PTAL rating of 6b – the highest rating possible – with a large amount of public transport hubs less than 5 minutes away.

Holborn Underground station is located approximately 0.7 miles from the application site with Tottenham Court Road underground located to the East & Covent Garden station found to the South.

PLANNING HISTORY

From information made publicly available, the below highlights relevant planning history:

Reference	Description	Decision
2018/1160/P	Change of use from office (B1) to flexible use as office (B1) or dentist surgery (D1) at ground and lower ground floor levels	Approved
2015/4205/P	Roof extension to provide additional office space	Approved

THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The planning application seeks a change of use from B1 (Office) to a D1 (Non-Aesthetics Clinic) at first floor level with the provision of internal alterations

The applicant (The Royale Aesthetics Clinic) currently offers an array of services including:

- Dermal filler
- Anti-wrinkle treatments
- Thread lifting
- Fat dissolving
- Mesotherapy
- Acne Scar Treatment
- Pigmentation Treatment
- Rosacea Treatments
- IPL Hair Removal
- Dermatologist Consultation

The Skin Care Company currently run another clinic located in Mayfair and seek to expand the business into an additional location.

The proposals will include minor internal alterations including the introduction of a reception and waiting area and three treatment rooms.

There will be no external alterations made to the property therefore not effecting the existing buildings façade.

SCALE

The proposed application will alter the scale of the unit which is approximately 72M² at first floor level.

APPEARANCE

The geometry and layout of the present building will be retained however minimal internal alterations will be made to the property.

ACCESS

Access to the site will be unaltered, with frontal access via Grape Street for the general staff members and visitors to the clinic.

PROPOSED OPENING TIMES

Monday to Friday: 10:00 – 22:00

Saturday: 10:00 – 22:00

Sunday: 10:00-22:00

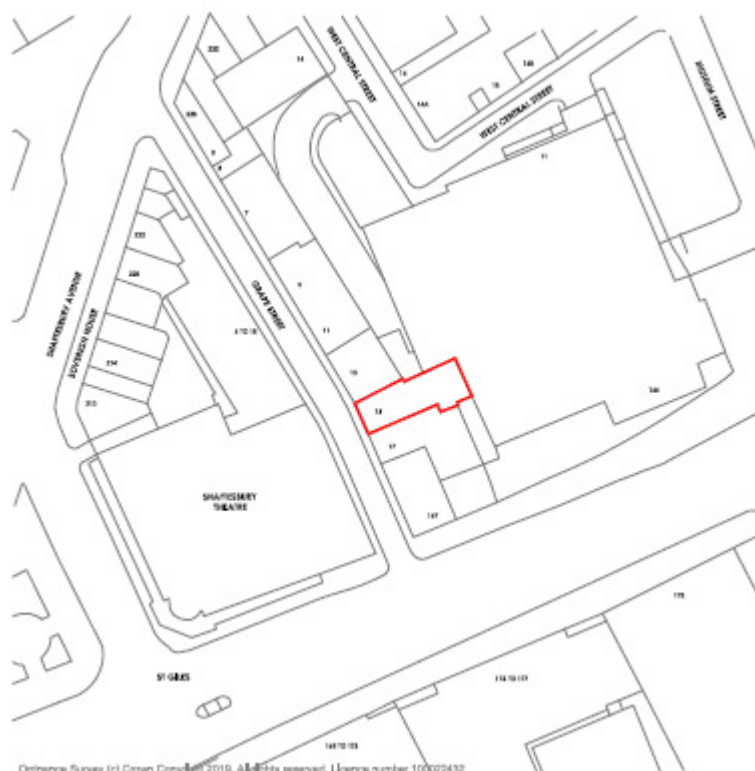
EMPLOYMENT

Full Time Staff: 5

Part Time Staff: 4

HERITAGE

No15 Grape Street is in the London Borough of Camden and situated in the Bloomsbury Conservation Area (CA designated 01/03/1984). It is not a listed building but is described in the Conservation Area Assessment (CAA - LBoC 2011) as a 'Positive Contributor' 1 to the character of the CA. Buildings opposite and nearby are listed; the site is within the setting of these (e.g. Grape Street 1-7 (odd), 2-20 (even) - See below)



The Conservation Area Assessment of the CA sets out the various 'character sub-areas' – Grape Street is within Sub Area 8: *New Oxford Street/High Holborn/Southampton Row*.

The CAA states the following:

The predominant architectural styles of the Conservation Area are classically derived, regardless of period or building type. (Para. 3.28)

Owing to the size and complexity of the Conservation Area, it has been sub-divided into a series of character areas that generally share common characteristics to assist in defining those features that contribute to the area's special interest. (Para. 5.1)
The site is in sub-area 8, titled *New Oxford Street/High Holborn/Southampton Row*.

An extract from para.5.130 describes the immediate area of the site thus:

...On the east side of the space are the grade II listed King Edward Mansions and Queen Alexandra Mansions. These ornate five-storey blocks date from 1902-08 and were designed by Charles Fitzroy Doll, Surveyor to the Bedford Estate, and present a lively but consistent edge to the south-eastern edge of the open space. They extend along both sides of Grape Street, a narrow thoroughfare sloping down from north to south from Shaftesbury Avenue in the north to High Holborn in the south. The blocks contain shops at street level with former showrooms and offices above on the Shaftesbury Avenue frontage, and with flats on the upper floors along Grape decoration, including corner turrets with conical roofs which feature in long views. The grade II listed Bloomsbury public house at No 236 Shaftesbury Avenue is part of this group, although its principal frontage faces New Oxford Street. Also attributed to Fitzroy Doll, it is constructed from red brick but with white terracotta decoration. To the rear of the public house is a symmetrically-fronted 19th century building in yellow stock brick with a tall central door, arched windows and a pediment above, all of which positively contribute to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

Development of the immediate area:



The listing description reads:

Shaftesbury Theatre HIGH HOLBORN. Theatre. 1911, by Bertie Crewe. Terracotta, stone and brick in elaborate Renaissance style. Rectangular plan on a corner site, the main entrance being at the angle of Shaftesbury Avenue and High Holborn.

EXTERIOR: 3 storeys, 4 bays to each return, the entrance bay being curved. Ground floor rusticated with continuous plain canopy over. 1st floor rusticated, much of the fenestration covered by hoarding. 2nd floor with Diocletian windows & oculi in alternate bays, the entrance having rectangular windows with enriched architraves, all having large consoles under a cornice and elaborate parapet. Above the entrance front, a cupola.

INTERIOR: foyer and booking hall with delicate plaster decoration. Auditorium of considerable richness with 2 cantilevered balconies, the fronts varied in form and decoration. Rectangular ceiling with enriched cove and cornice and circular flat-domed centre. Segmental proscenium arch with figure reliefs in spandrels over. Bow-fronted boxes paired in two tiers and framed by giant Ionic columns rising from heavy console brackets and carrying an entablature with figures, the whole composition crowned by a semi-circular arch and a heavily moulded eaves cornice. In the arch tympanum a sculptural group is set over each upper box. Balustraded balcony terraces at upper box level run laterally along the walls towards the boxes and balustraded front to filled orchestra pit.

HISTORICAL NOTE: the theatre was designed as a melodrama house. (Ref: Curtains!!! or, A New Life for Old Theatres: London: -1982: 157-58).

Fig 4 also shows the large footprint of the multi-storey carpark to the east of the site.

Fig 5 shows the extent of above-ground heritage assets in the immediate area. The site, at least the front onto Grape Street, is noted as a 'positive' building in this analysis but it is not formally designated.



Fig 5 Extract from LBoC CAA Sub Area 8 (Not to scale)

Significance

Significance is determined by reference to, amongst other things, the '4 values' (See Appendix 1)

- Evidential value
- Aesthetic value
- Historical value
- Communal value

Bloomsbury CA is considered to be of HIGH significance but the proposed works are unlikely, in themselves, to have any material impact on the character, integrity or significance of the CA. The proposals are considered to constitute, *inter alia*, an enhancement.

The setting of assets does not have significance in its own right. The settings of listed buildings in Grape Street and in the vicinity are unlikely to be affected by the development, and hence the HIGH significance of those assets will remain unaltered.

The building No 15 is an undesignated asset, of LOW to MEDIUM significance in its own right. The works proposed are complimentary and will ensure the long-term beneficial use of the premises in employment use. This is considered to constitute a positive impact on the life of the asset and therefore, at worst, a neutral impact on its significance.

Conclusion

In heritage terms, the proposed change of use is considered to be appropriate in all respects.

It is considered that the proposals reflect the spirit and detail of prevailing national, London-wide and local policy

NATIONAL AND LOCAL PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

National Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) came into effect on 27 March 2012. The document effectively condenses previous planning policy guidance into one document (with the exception of certain Planning Policy Statements).

At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development and paragraph 15 states:

'Policies in Local Plans should follow the approach of the presumption...so that it is clear that development which is sustainable can be approved without delay'

One of the core planning principles set out in paragraph 17 of the NPPF states that planning should:

'Not simply be about scrutiny, but instead be a creative exercise in finding ways to enhance and improve the places in which people live their lives'

Section 12 on conserving and enhancing the historic environment states that in determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

'The desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness'

London Plan

The council's local development documents have to be 'in general conformity' with the London Plan, which is also legally part of the development plan that has to be taken into account when planning decisions are taken in any part of London unless there are planning reasons why it should not.

Relating policy:

Policy 2.15 Town Centres

Policy 4.3 Mixed use development and offices

Policy 7.6 Architecture

Policy 7.14 Improving air quality

Local Planning Policies

The Council's Local Plan was adopted by Council on 3 July 2017 and has replaced the Core Strategy and Camden Development Policies documents as the basis for planning decisions and future development in the borough.

In this instance, Policy E2 is the most relevant and states:

The Council will encourage the provision of employment premises and sites in the borough. We will protect premises or sites that are suitable for continued business use, in particular premises for small businesses, businesses and services that provide employment for Camden residents and those that support the functioning of the Central Activities Zone (CAZ) or the local economy.

We will resist development of business premises and sites for non-business use unless it is demonstrated to the Council's satisfaction:

- a. the site or building is no longer suitable for its existing business use; and*
- b. that the possibility of retaining, reusing or redeveloping the site or building for similar or alternative type and size of business use has been fully explored over an appropriate period of time.*

We will consider higher intensity redevelopment of premises or sites that are suitable for continued business provided that:

- c. the level of employment floorspace is increased or at least maintained;*
- d. the redevelopment retains existing businesses on the site as far as possible, and in particular industry, light industry, and warehouse/logistic uses that support the functioning of the CAZ or the local economy;*
- e. it is demonstrated to the Council's satisfaction that any relocation of businesses supporting the CAZ or the local economy will not cause harm to CAZ functions or Camden's local economy and will be to a sustainable location;*
- f. the proposed premises include floorspace suitable for start-ups, small and medium-sized enterprises, such as managed affordable workspace where viable;*
- g. the scheme would increase employment opportunities for local residents, including training and apprenticeships;*
- h. the scheme includes other priority uses, such as housing, affordable housing and open space, where relevant, and where this would not prejudice the continued operation of businesses on the site; and*
- i. for larger employment sites,*

Policy also goes on to state:

Having a range of sites and premises across the borough to suit the different needs of businesses for space, location and accessibility is vital to maintaining and developing Camden's successful economy. An increase in the number and diversity of employment opportunities is fundamental to improving the competitiveness of Camden and of London. The Council wants to encourage the development of a

broad economic base in the borough to help meet the varied employment needs, skills and qualifications of Camden's workforce.

We will seek to ensure that existing and future employment uses can operate effectively without being in conflict with other sensitive uses such as housing. Policy A4 Noise and vibration provides further advice on this matter.

Proposals involving loss of business premises and sites

When assessing proposals that involve the loss of a business use to a nonbusiness use we will consider whether there is potential for that use to continue. We will take into account various factors including:

- the suitability of the location for any business use;*
- whether the premises are in a reasonable condition to allow the use to continue;*
- the range of unit sizes it provides, particularly suitability for small businesses; and*
- whether the business use is well related to nearby land uses.*

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

The NPPF emphasises that the presumption in favour of sustainable development should be at the heart of plan-making and decision-taking which means that planning permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the NPPF as a whole. Significant weight should be placed on developments such as this which bring investment and create new job opportunities.

The proposed change of use would wholly support the aims of the NPPF by investing in the local economy, creating new jobs and supporting small enterprises within the local area. National policy is fully supportive of the development of town centre usages in accessible locations, such as the application site.

In support of this a marketing report has been attached as part of this submission dated 12th April 2019 created by Farebrother who have marketed the property since February 2016 without success. The document outlines the different methods of marketing the unit including a variety of high-profile websites.

With all of the above considered the property has been vacant since December 2015 and marketed since early January of 2016. Without a change of use, this property may remain on the market for even longer.

The existing use is a material consideration as are the characteristics of the immediate surroundings. Given its small scale, it is considered that the proposed use would be reasonably consistent with the existing site use characteristics and its relationship to its immediate surroundings.

The existing use does not provide any shopping needs for the local community and does not provide local conveniences due to its vacancy.

The National Planning Policy Framework and Camden's Local policies all seek to promote accessibility to a range of services and facilities. All of the above provides evidence that the application site is located within in an assessible location therefore supporting the national and local planning policies.

All waste and recycling will be stored on site and a waste contractor will be appointed to collect any waste and recycling produced.

CONCLUSION

With the above & accompanying information, it is respectfully requested that this application for a change of use from B1 to D1 be approved.

It is deemed that this change of use does not negatively affect the surrounding area adversely in any way and should be viewed as a positive addition to the local community.

The proposed is in line with the NPPF, London and local policy, therefore we look forward to validation of the application and approval from the council.