



PLANNING DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

Internal refit within the existing retail unit with proposed changes to the shopfront and installation of air conditioning units at rear of building

AT

2 Percy Street, Fitzrovia, London, W1T 1DD

JANUARY 2020

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This statement has been prepared by RJS Planning on behalf of Mr Rizwan Ahmed in support of a planning application for an internal refit within the existing retail unit, together with changes to the shopfront and the installation of air conditioning units at the rear of the building.

1.2 This statement will consider the planning issues raised by the proposal in the context of national and local planning policy advice.

2.0 THE SITE

2.1 The application site is located on the southern side of Percy Street and forms part of a group of Grade II listed properties with Nos. 1 and 3, which are three-storey Georgian terraced townhouses within Fitzrovia, Central London. The property is also included within the Charlotte Street Conservation Area.

2.2 No. 2 Percy Street is a mixed use building, with the ground floor and basement forming a single retail unit, which is the subject of this application, with residential uses on the upper floors. The property fronts Percy Street and has Percy Mews to the rear of the building, which is accessed from Rathbone Place to the west.

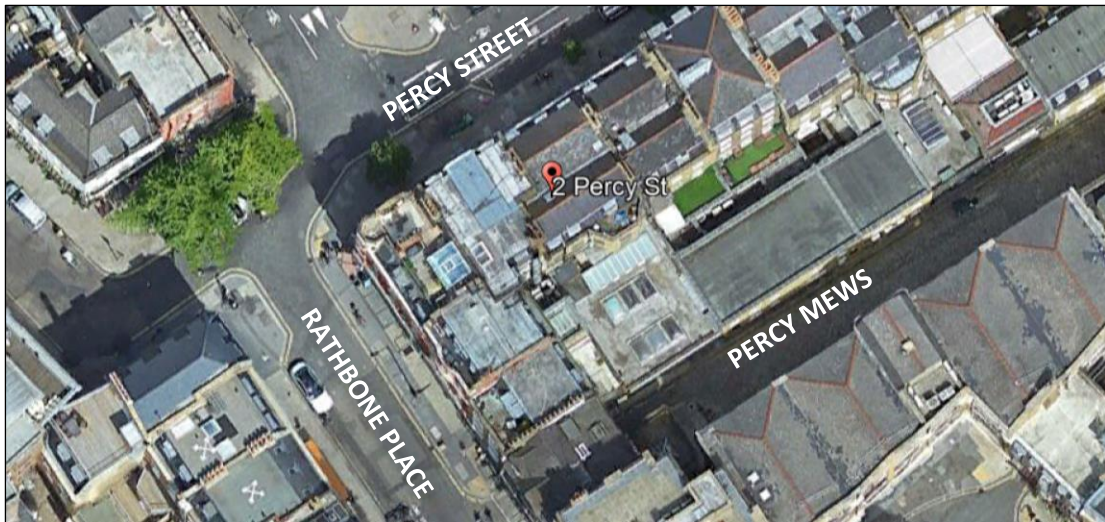


Application Site – No. 2 Percy Street

2.3 No. 2 Percy Street and the neighbouring properties Nos. 1 and 3 to each side are described in detail in the 'Statement of Significance & Heritage Statement' compiled by Architectural & Historic Buildings Consultants, with these buildings having a similar arrangement of commercial use to the ground floor and basement, with residential above.

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2.4 Percy Street and the surrounding area is characterised by a vibrant mix of uses with retail, services, cafés and restaurants at ground floor level, and office and residential floorspace above.

2.5 The application property has a full width projection to the rear which is single storey with a basement beneath, with doors opening on to Percy Mews to the rear.



Application Site

2.6 In contrast to Percy Street, Percy Mews has a more functional appearance, and accommodates a mix of uses but is predominantly in office and residential use. There is also ‘The Wheatsheaf’ public house close to the application site, at the entrance to Percy Mews, which extends to the rear, into the mews.



Application Site

3.0 THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 3.1 The application proposes an internal refit within the existing retail unit, changes to the existing shopfront and the installation of air conditioning units at the rear of building.
- 3.2 The refurbishment of the existing shop space will provide a bespoke interior to the retail unit which includes a number of changes to existing partitions and wall linings at ground and basement level, the replacement of the existing modern rear stair, the creation of a new doorway into the existing lightwell, and the strengthening of the existing high level structure at ground floor to allow for the erection of a suspended ceiling.
- 3.3 The development also includes minimal changes to the appearance of the shopfront, with a black matte vinyl film to the inside face of the glass at low level, concealing the trough to the window display 'claw machine' and new powder coated signage above with white Plexiglas text.
- 3.4 To the rear, the installation of 3 air conditioning units is proposed, required to provide heating and cooling to the ground and basement floors of the retail unit, which are to be located to the rear of No. 2 Percy Street, on the existing flat roof above the ground floor. They will be set back 2.0m from the rear elevation on Percy Mews, and away from the windows of the adjacent properties, with the location identified in Figure F.1. of the Noise Impact Assessment by ACCON UK Limited.
- 3.5 The details of the proposed development will be discussed in more depth later in this statement, which ought to be read in conjunction with the Statement of Significance & Heritage Statement compiled by Architectural & Historic Buildings Consultants.

4.0 SUBMITTED PLANS

- 4.1 The proposal is shown in more detail on the supporting drawings which accompany the current planning application; a comprehensive list of which is included in **Appendix A**.
- 4.2 The drawing sets have been grouped under the following headings:
- 1 – Existing (drawings 1.1 – 1.14)
 - 2 – Project (drawings 2.1 – 2.15)
 - 3 – Demolition / Construction (drawings 3.1 – 3.3)
 - 4 – Doors and Windows (drawings 4.1 – 4.10)
 - 5 – MEP (drawings 5.1 – 5.8)
 - 7 – Furniture Details (drawings 7.1 – 7.18)
- 4.3 Other supporting documents submitted with the application include:
- Appendix A – List of Drawings
 - Appendix B - Statement of Significance & Heritage Statement
 - Appendix C - Noise Impact Assessment

5.0 RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY

5.1 The following paragraphs provide a brief summary of the relevant policies and the relevant guidance within the National Planning Policy Framework. The paragraphs are in a hierarchical order relative to national and local planning policy.

5.2 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

5.3 For the purposes of the current application the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990, National Planning Policy Framework (2019), Planning Practice Guidance, Historic England Conservation Principles: Policies and Guidance 2008, the London Plan (2016), the Draft London Plan (2019) and Camden Local Plan 2017, are all of relevance, together with the Charlotte Street Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (2008) and the Fitzrovia Area Action Plan (2014).

National Planning Policy Framework – February 2019 (NPPF)

5.4 The NPPF (February 2019) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied, this document replaces the National Planning Policy Framework published in July 2018. The following sections and paragraphs make reference to the parts of the NPPF which are directly relevant to this application.

Achieving sustainable development

5.5 The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. At a very high level, the objective of sustainable development can be summarised as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives): economic, social and environmental.

Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

5.6 Paragraph 11 of the NPPF advises that plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

5.7 For plan-making this means that:

- a) plans should positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs of their area, and be sufficiently flexible to adapt to rapid change;
- b) strategic policies should, as a minimum, provide for objectively assessed needs for housing and other uses, as well as any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas, unless:

- i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a strong reason for restricting the overall scale, type or distribution of development in the plan area; or
- ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.

Decision-making

- 5.8 Paragraph 38 states that local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way. They should use the full range of planning tools available, including brownfield registers and permission in principle, and work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.

Building a strong, competitive economy

- 5.9 Paragraph 80 states that *“Planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development”*.

Ensuring the vitality of town centres

- 5.10 Planning policies and decisions should support the role that town centres play at the heart of local communities, by taking a positive approach to their growth, management and adaptation. This includes:

*a) define a network and hierarchy of town centres and promote their long-term vitality and viability – **by allowing them to grow and diversify in a way that can respond to rapid changes in the retail and leisure industries, allows a suitable mix of uses (including housing) and reflects their distinctive characters**”*.

Promoting healthy and safe communities

- 5.11 Paragraph 91 states that planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which, amongst other objectives, *“promote social interaction, including opportunities for meetings between people who might not otherwise come into contact with each other – for example **through mixed-use developments, strong neighbourhood centres, street layouts that allow for easy pedestrian and cycle connections within and between neighbourhoods, and active street frontages**”*.

Making effective use of land

- 5.12 Paragraph 118 states that planning policies and decisions should encourage multiple benefits from both urban and rural land, including through mixed use schemes, and amongst other criteria, promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings.

Achieving well-designed places

- 5.13 Section 12 of the NPPF describes how the creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve, stating that *“Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities”*.
- 5.14 Paragraph 126 states that to provide maximum clarity about design expectations at an early stage, plans or supplementary planning documents should use visual tools such as design guides and codes. These provide a framework for creating distinctive places, with a consistent and high quality standard of design. However their level of detail and degree of prescription should be tailored to the circumstances in each place, and should allow a suitable degree of variety where this would be justified.
- 5.15 Paragraph 127 states that planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:
- a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;
 - b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;
 - c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);
 - d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;
 - e) optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and
 - f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.
- 5.16 Paragraph 130 highlights that where the design of a development accords with clear expectations in plan policies, design should not be used by the decision-maker as a valid reason to object to development.
- 5.17 It should also be noted that Paragraph 131 states that *“In determining applications, great weight should be given to outstanding or innovative designs which promote high levels of sustainability, or help raise the standard of design more generally in an area, so long as they fit in with the overall form and layout of their surroundings”*.

Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

- 5.18 Section 16 of the NPPF refers to the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment. Paragraph 185 sets out that local planning authorities should take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.
- 5.19 Paragraph 193 states that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.
- 5.20 Paragraph 195 states that local planning authorities should refuse consent if a proposed development would lead to substantial harm to (or total loss of significance of) a heritage asset.
- 5.21 The NPPF does not define "*substantial harm*" but it is widely accepted as including the total loss of a heritage asset, or fundamental compromise of its significance by means of extensive physical alterations, or inappropriate development within its setting. Such an impact can only be justified on the grounds that the harm is necessary to deliver important public benefits that outweigh the value of the heritage asset. In these terms it is absolutely clear that the application proposal will not result in "*substantial harm*" to the conservation area.
- 5.22 Paragraph 196 of the NPPF states that where a development proposal would lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.
- 5.23 Local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within conservation areas and world heritage sites, and within the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements to the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset should be treated favourably.

The London Plan (2016)

- 5.24 The London Plan is the overall strategic plan for London and sets out a framework for the development of London over the next 20-25 years. Policies 4.8, 4.9 and 7.8 of the London Plan are relevant to this application.

Policy 4.8: Supporting a Successful and Diverse Retail Sector and Related Facilities and Services

- 5.25 Policy 4.8 states that the Mayor will, and boroughs and other stakeholders should, support a successful, competitive and diverse retail sector which promotes sustainable access to the goods and services that Londoners need and the broader objectives of the spatial structure of this Plan, especially town centres. LDFs should take a proactive approach to planning for retailing and related facilities and services, with this policy listing the methods by which this can be achieved.

Policy 4.9: Small Shops

- 5.26 Section A states that *“In considering proposals for large retail developments, the Mayor will, and Boroughs should, consider imposing conditions or seeking contributions through planning obligations where appropriate, feasible and viable, to provide or support affordable shop units suitable for small or independent retailers and service outlets and/or to strengthen and promote the retail offer, attractiveness and competitiveness of centres”*. Section B adds that *“In LDFs, Boroughs should develop local policies where appropriate to support the provision of small shop units”*.

Policy 7.8: Heritage Assets and Archaeology

- 5.27 In regards to planning decisions, section C states Development should identify, value, conserve, restore, re-use and incorporate heritage assets, where appropriate. Section D states Development affecting heritage assets and their settings should conserve their significance, by being sympathetic to their form, scale, materials and architectural detail.

The London Plan (Draft)

- 5.28 The current 2016 Plan (The London Plan consolidated with alterations since 2011) is still the adopted Development Plan, but the Draft London Plan is a material consideration in planning decisions. The significance given to it is a matter for the decision maker, but it gains more weight as it moves through the process to adoption.

Policy HC1: Heritage conservation and growth

- 5.29 This strategic policy retains the conservation principles of the 2016 Plan, however there is a new emphasis on the need for the London Boroughs’ to provide evidence that demonstrates a clear understanding of the historic environment. This is combined with the requirement to provide plans and strategies which will inform the effective integration of London’s heritage in regenerative change.

Camden Local Plan 2017

- 5.30 The Camden Local Plan sets out the council’s planning policies. It ensures that Camden continues to have robust, effective and up to-date planning policies that respond to changing circumstances and the borough’s unique characteristics and contribute to delivering the Camden Plan and other local priorities. The Local Plan will cover the period from 2016-2031.

Policy D2: Heritage

- 5.31 The Council will preserve and, where appropriate, enhance Camden's rich and diverse heritage assets and their settings, including conservation areas, listed buildings, archaeological remains, scheduled ancient monuments and historic parks and gardens and locally listed heritage assets.
- 5.32 Designed heritage assets include conservation areas and listed buildings. The Council will not permit the loss of or substantial harm to a designated heritage asset, including conservation areas and Listed Buildings, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply:
- a. the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site;*
 - b. no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation;*
 - c. conservation by grant-funding or some form of charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and*
 - d. the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.*
- 5.33 Conservation areas are designated heritage assets and this section should be read in conjunction with the section above headed 'designated heritage assets'. In order to maintain the character of Camden's conservation areas, the Council will take account of conservation area statements, appraisals and management strategies when assessing applications within conservation areas. The Council will:
- e. require that development within conservation areas preserves or, where possible, enhances the character or appearance of the area;*
 - f. resist the total or substantial demolition of an unlisted building that makes a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a conservation area;*
 - g. resist development outside of a conservation area that causes harm to the character or appearance of that conservation area; and*
 - h. preserve trees and garden spaces which contribute to the character and appearance of a conservation area or which provide a setting for Camden's architectural heritage.*
- 5.34 Listed buildings are designated heritage assets and this section should be read in conjunction with the section above headed 'designated heritage assets'. To preserve or enhance the borough's listed buildings, the Council will:
- i. resist the total or substantial demolition of a listed building;*
 - 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.*

6.0 THE PLANNING CASE

Introduction

6.1 This section will demonstrate that the proposed internal refit within the existing retail unit, with changes to the shopfront and the installation of air conditioning units at the rear of building, constitutes an acceptable form of development which enables a more viable use of No. 2 Percy Street, with the main considerations in the assessment of this application relating to:

- Principle of the development
- Existing interior
- Proposed interior
- External changes
- Presumption in favour of sustainable development
- Impact on the Conservation Area and Listed Building

6.2 This statement ought to be read in conjunction with the submitted series of plans as listed in **Appendix A**, the Statement of Significance & Heritage Statement compiled by Architectural & Historic Buildings Consultants contained within **Appendix B** and the Noise Impact Assessment by ACCON UK Limited within **Appendix C**.

Principle of the development

6.3 The retail unit occupies the ground floor and basement of No. 2 Percy Street, which is a Grade II listed building within the Charlotte Street Conservation Area, with Percy Street described in the Charlotte Street Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan as having a mix of shops and restaurants set in three storey townhouses.

6.4 Local Plan - Appendix 4: Centre Frontages, identifies that the property is located within one of the Specialist Retail Areas of 'Fitzrovia and south-west Bloomsbury' and is therefore included in Fitzrovia Area Action Plan (2014), which considers the character that gives Fitzrovia its unique identity and the challenges that it faces, and uses these as a basis for developing a Vision and Objectives for the future of the area.

6.5 The shopping provision that are characteristic of Fitzrovia are noted as specialist shops such as art dealers and bookshops which can be found throughout the Plan area, but are focussed particularly on Percy Street, Warren Street and Windmill Street (as well as in the neighbourhood centres). The Council therefore seek to retain existing retail units and maintain the overall stock of retail premises (whether or not they are occupied by a specialist shop). The Council will also promote the provision of new premises suitable for specialist and independent shops in appropriate locations. The proposal to refurbish the retail unit at No. 2 Percy Street therefore meets these objectives, with the refit of the interior improving upon the existing condition and layout of the ground floor and basement, with minimal changes providing the interior required by the new business and its unique presentation of high quality mechanise.

- 6.6 London Plan Policy 4.8 supports a successful, competitive and diverse retail sector which promotes sustainable access to the goods and services that Londoners need and suggests that LDFs should take a proactive approach to planning for retailing and related facilities and services. The application proposal finds further support within Policy 4.9 'Small Shops' which seeks to provide or support affordable shop units suitable for small or independent retailers and service outlets and/or to strengthen and promote the retail offer, attractiveness and competitiveness of centres.
- 6.7 It is therefore recognised within the London Plan, the Local Plan and the Fitzrovia Area Action Plan that there is a need to support smaller independent businesses within a location where they can flourish; which in this case can be achieved by allowing the existing unit to be updated and improved to provide the specification required by the new business seeking to occupy the premises.
- 6.8 It is therefore clear that the development will introduce a high specification retail outlet to complement the varied independent businesses within the area, which is also an objective supported by the NPPF (2019), which states that planning policies and decisions should support the role that town centres play at the heart of local communities, by taking a positive approach to their growth, management and adaptation, which includes the promotion of their long-term vitality and viability – *“by allowing them to grow and diversify in a way that can respond to rapid changes in the retail and leisure industries, allows a suitable mix of uses (including housing) and reflects their distinctive characters”*.
- 6.9 The principle of the development to refurbish the existing retail unit, by modernising and improving the interior fitments, therefore ought to be supported as the works will be carried out in a sympathetic manner, to ensure no harm is caused to the original fabric of the building, and no subsequent harm will occur if the installation is removed at a later date.

Existing interior

- 6.10 The application is for the refurbishment of the existing shop space, with the insertion of a new ceiling substructure to facilitate a suspended ceiling and the reconfiguration of the space at basement level to provide new dressing and storage rooms. The development also includes the replacement of the existing modern timber staircase within the rear section of the unit, in line with current regulations, and other minor changes to doorways, the majority of which will alter more recent partition walls and will therefore not significantly change the existing historic plan of the property.
- 6.11 The interior of the retail unit is currently in a poor state to repair, with very few original features of the property remaining. During previous refits, the walls and ceiling have been lined with plasterboard, which has been partially stripped back in order to allow an assessment of the works required to refurbish the interior to the standard required.

6.12 As pictured below, the existing shop is largely devoid of historic or architectural features which are of significance, having been previously adapted largely through the use of stud walls and has modern plasterboard ceilings throughout. Where these have been stripped back, old tiling and some original brickwork can be seen.



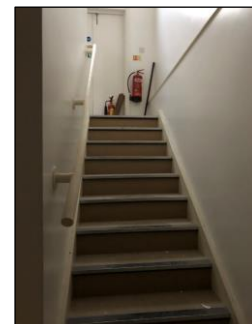
Existing Ground Floor



Existing Basement



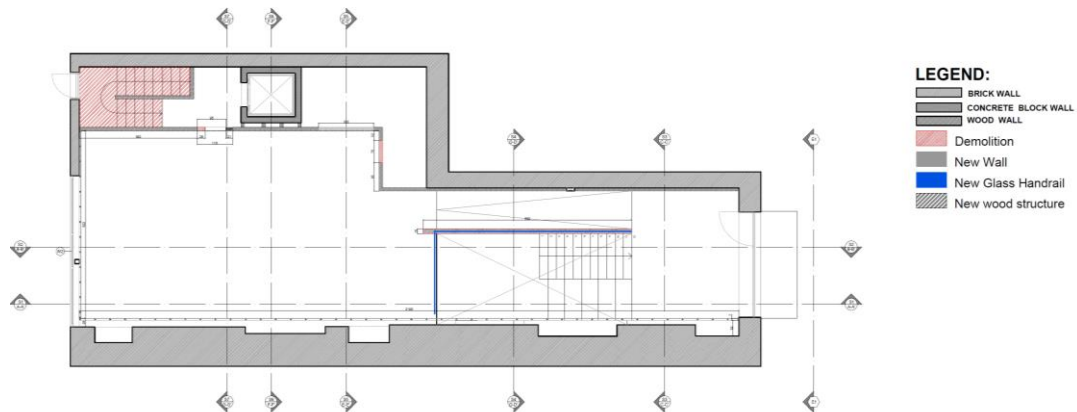
Central Staircase and Basement Kitchen Area



Existing Lightwell, Lift and Staircase

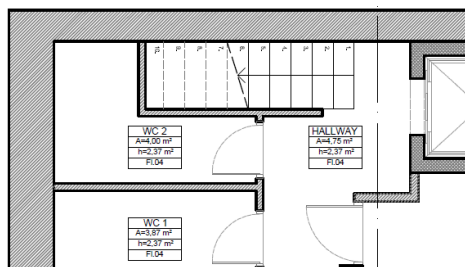
Proposed interior

6.13 The plan excerpt below indicates the demolition and remedial works proposed on the ground floor, which include a new doorway within the existing partition wall and the blocking of the existing double width doorway opening. The existing doorway to the lift and rear staircase will also be widened to provide better access, with none of these changes impacting the original fabric of the building.

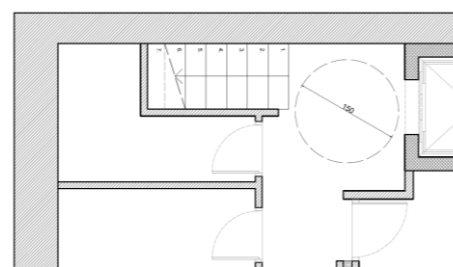


**Proposed Alterations to the Ground Floor
Excerpt from Drawing No. 3.1**

6.14 It is also proposed to replace the existing timber rear staircase, which is modern in construction and of no historic interest, to ensure that sufficient circulation space is provided between the stairs and the lift, as the existing staircase does not comply with the current DDA regulation, as illustrated in the excerpts below.

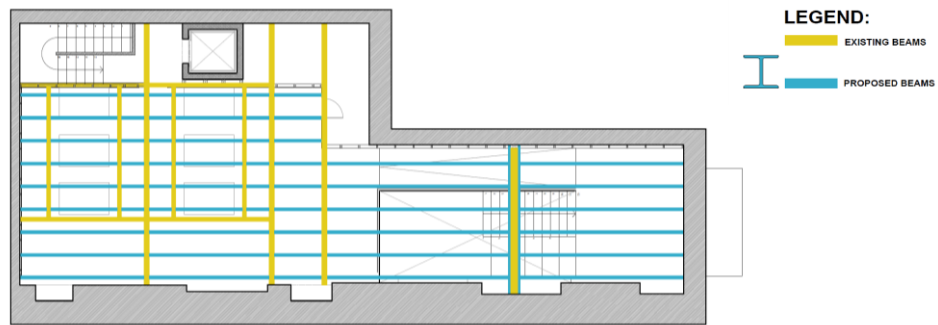


**Existing Timber Staircase at Basement Level
Excerpt from Drawing No. 1.2**



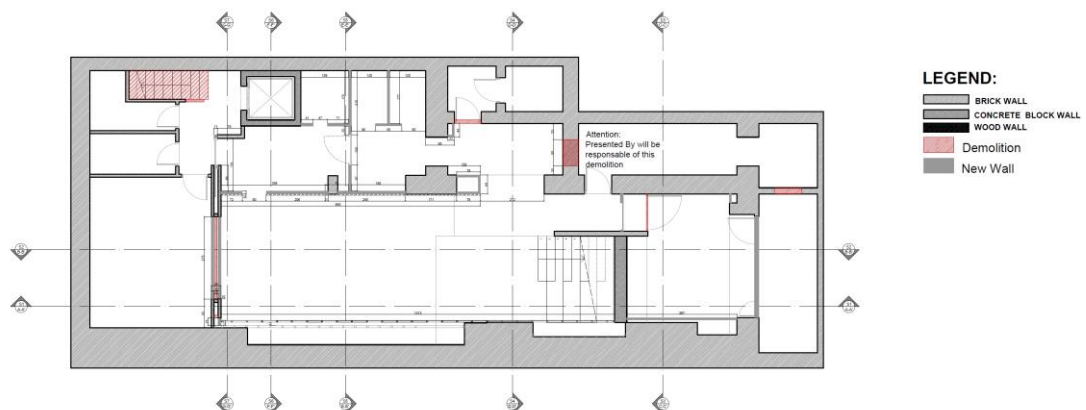
**Proposed Staircase at Basement Level
Excerpt from Drawing No. 2.5**

6.15 The proposal also includes the strengthening of the existing ceiling with a new substructure of steel beams to ensure the proposed suspended ceiling does not compromise the structural integrity of the historic fabric of the designated heritage asset, as detailed in Drawing No. 3.3. The strengthening will incorporate insertion of new steel beams which will run from the front to the rear of the building, connecting with the four existing beams which run horizontally across the property, from party wall to party wall.



Existing and Proposed Beams
Excerpt from Drawing No. 3.3

- 6.16 It is also proposed that the timber beam, which runs centrally across the historic core of the building will be reinforced by the proposal to clad it on both sides with PFC steels. This girder is the only timber beam within the existing ceiling structure that is deemed to be of value and of some age, although it is unlikely to date from the 18th Century. The remaining cross beams are modern steels, including one which supports the rear elevation and the bay window of the townhouse. From the new ceiling substructure, it is proposed to suspend a new ceiling, comprising wooden bricks which will be hung in an arched configuration.
- 6.17 The party wall with No.3 has 5 recesses in the brickwork. It is proposed at ground and basement level, to line out the eastern party wall using demountable stud partitions, to create a uniform line to the wall, this will also ensure that the proposed fitments and furniture will not be fixed to or harm any of the existing historic features.
- 6.18 At basement level, it is proposed to insert a number of stud partition walls between the remaining brickwork piers to create new dressing rooms and a series of storage rooms.



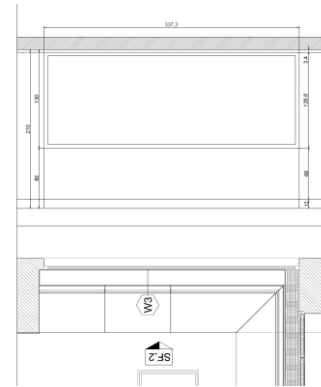
Proposed Alterations to the Basement
Excerpt from Drawing No. 3.2

- 6.19 It is also proposed to insert a full height internal window within a section of the brickwork which currently forms part of a corridor.

6.20 Within the front elevation of the basement it is proposed to replace the window and glazed door with a new fixed window, with the Statement of Significance & Heritage Statement having assessed that the proposed replacement window on the front elevation at basement level is considered acceptable, as this is currently a modern window of no intrinsic interest, therefore replacing it with a contemporary window will have a neutral impact on the asset.

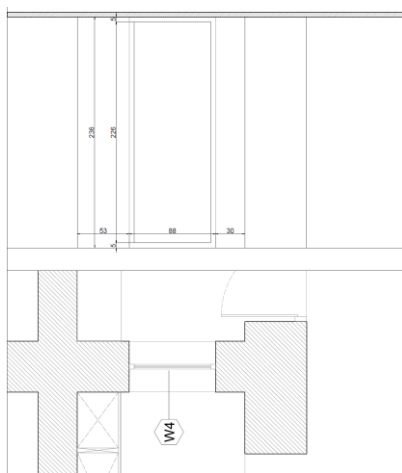


Window & Door to be Replaced

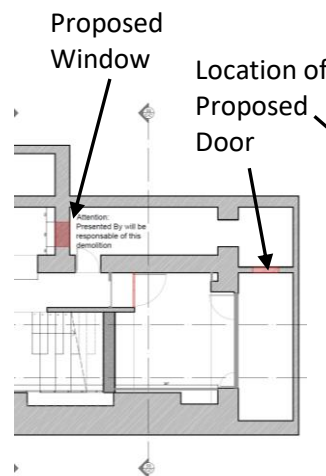


**Proposed Replacement Window
Excerpt from Drawing No. 4.9**

6.21 Furthermore, it is proposed to insert a new door within the wall of the property to gain access to the lightwell from the western side, by removing a section of the original brickwork wall, which is also considered acceptable, with the Heritage Statement suggesting that *“whilst some brickwork would be lost, the proposed position is reflective of a servants’ entrance and will be visually unobtrusive in views of the listed building and the street scene”*. It is considered that any residual harm caused by the loss of brickwork will be offset by the benefits that will be afforded in providing access to the area. These benefits include the opportunity of maintaining the space in good order. It is therefore considered on balance that the proposal will preserve the significance of the heritage asset.



**Proposed Window
Excerpt from Drawing No. 4.10**



Existing Lightwell

- 6.22 The proposals include storage and display units throughout both floors as detailed within the submitted plans, with all storage and display units to be demountable or to be fixed to the proposed stud walls. It is also proposed that some decorative elements, such as timber bricks and metal cladding will be added to the space.
- 6.23 Other than the reinforced ceiling and doors and windows detailed above, the alterations to the property are not structural and are reversible and purposefully designed to ensure no harm is caused to the historic fabric of the building,
- 6.24 The internal changes proposed will convert the retail unit from a dilapidated plasterboard lined shell into a vibrant and attractive retail space, with a high specification finish which reflects the quality of merchandise to be displayed within this unique shopping experience.



Visualisation of the Proposed Retail Space on the Ground Floor



Visualisation of the Proposed Retail Space within the Basement

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External changes - Shopfront

- 6.25 The application includes minor alterations to the existing shopfront, with a black matte vinyl film to be added to the inside face of the glass at low level, concealing the trough to the window display 'claw machine' and new powder coated signage above with a matt black background and white Plexiglas text.



Existing Front Elevation



Proposed Front Elevation

- 6.26 As illustrated in the plan excerpts from drawings 1.12 and 2.11 above, the changes are sympathetic to the existing shopfront, with the proposed signage to be positioned to align with the existing rusticated stucco and the window displays of Nos. 3 and 4 Percy Street.



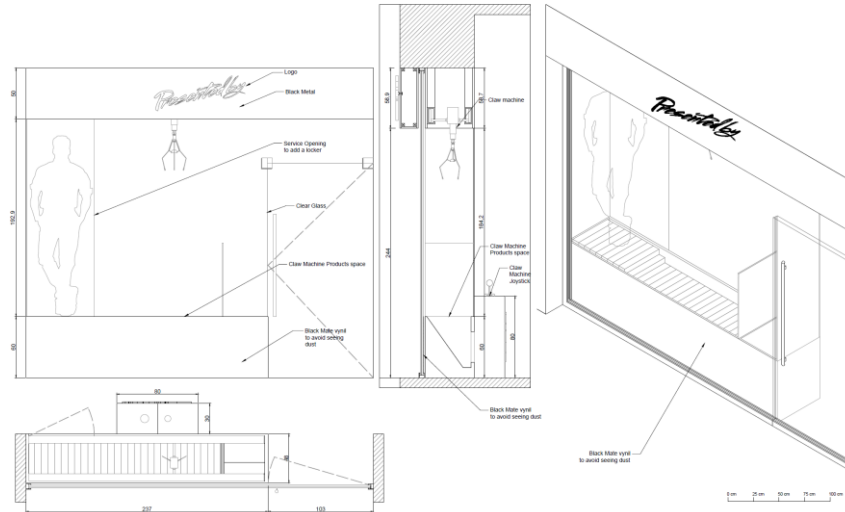
Street Scene of Percy Street

No. 2 Percy Street

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6.27 The changes to the shopfront are minimal and although the window display will reflect the bespoke design of the interior of the shop, the glazed exterior and door will be retained to maintain a consistent appearance of the retail unit within the street scene of Percy Street.



**Proposed Shopfront & Window Display
Excerpt from Drawing No. 7.18**

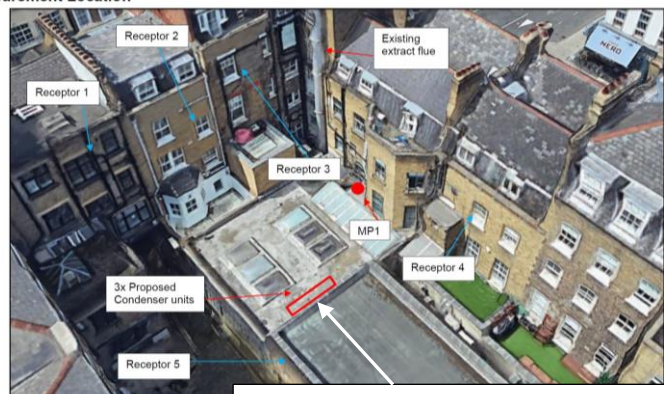
6.28 The proposed changes to the listed building that are visible within the streetscape are therefore appropriate to the locality, with the Council seeking to retain existing retail units, maintain the overall stock of retail premises and encourage specialist and independent shops in appropriate locations such as the Specialist Retail Areas of ‘Fitzrovia and south-west Bloomsbury’.

External changes - Installation of Air Conditioning Units

6.29 As part of the proposal to refurbish the retail unit at No. 2 Percy Street, it is proposed to install 3 air conditioning units to the rear of the building, as they are required to provide heating and cooling to the ground and basement floors of the retail unit.

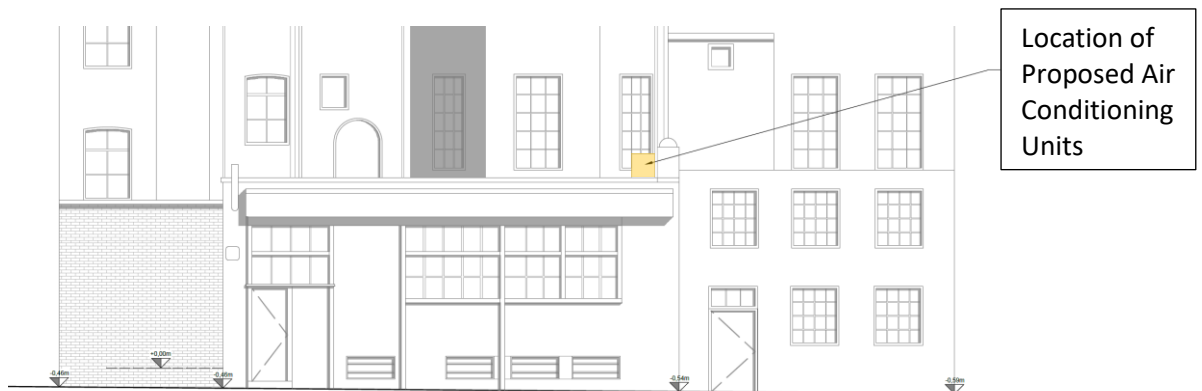
6.30 These will be located on the existing flat roof above the ground floor and will be set back 2.0m from the rear elevation which overlooks Percy Mews, and away from the windows of the adjacent properties, with the location identified in the adjacent Figure F.1. of the Noise Impact Assessment by ACCON UK Ltd.

Figure F.1: Site Location Plan Identifying Noise Sensitive Receptors, Noise Sources and Noise Measurement Location



Location of Air Conditioning Units

- 6.31 The Noise Impact Assessment was commissioned to determine the impact of noise from the externally mounted units on the nearest noise sensitive receptors and identify any appropriate mitigation measures, where required.
- 6.32 Following the assessment, the inclusion of an appropriate acoustic enclosure is recommended as a mitigation measure, to ensure the rated sound levels would be at least 10 dB below the typical background sound levels for all receptors, and to demonstrate that the Local Authority criterion of a rating level at least 10 dB below background sound level would be met. It is therefore requested that an appropriate enclosure can be agreed as a condition of approval.



- 6.33 The location of the units, set away from the upper floors of the building and also set in from the rear elevation of the single storey projection will effectively screen the units and the proposed enclosure from view at street level in Percy Mews. As shown in the image below, the roof level at the rear of No. 3 is higher, which will also assist in screening the proposed units from view.



- 6.34 It is therefore asserted that the proposed discrete location of the air conditioning units will improve the environment within the retail unit without harming the significance of the listed building or Conservation Area as heritage assets.

Presumption in favour of sustainable development

6.35 The NPPF contains a presumption in favour of sustainable development and identifies three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. It states that these dimensions give rise to the need for the planning system to perform a number of roles: an economic objective; a social objective; and an environmental objective. These are defined in paragraph 8 of the NPPF as follows:

- **an economic objective** – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;
- **a social objective** – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and
- **an environmental objective** – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.

6.36 Paragraph 9 of the NPPF advises these objectives should be delivered through the preparation and implementation of plans and the application of the policies in this Framework; they are not criteria against which every decision can or should be judged. Planning policies and decisions should play an active role in guiding development towards sustainable solutions, but in doing so should take local circumstances into account, to reflect the character, needs and opportunities of each area.

6.37 It is considered that the proposed development would achieve the economic, social and environmental gains required by the NPPF and as such would result in sustainable development in the following ways:

- the site is ideally located to serve the local community, being in close proximity to other local amenities including retail, leisure, community and business facilities, together with being close to residential dwellings that are integrated into this Specialist Retail Area of 'Fitzrovia and south-west Bloomsbury';
- the development would make efficient use of land, with the refurbishment of the existing retail unit at No. 2 Percy Street providing a higher quality retail A1 unit which accords with the aims of paragraph 127 of the NPPF, that states planning

policies and decisions should ensure that developments “*optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development*”;

- the proposal would clearly meet the economic objectives of the NPPF in assisting to build a strong, responsive and competitive economy. Allowing this retail unit to be upgraded and improved would support the business enterprise;
 - the development has been purposefully designed to retain the outer appearance of the listed property, with minimal changes to the exterior and only cosmetic enhancement to the front of the unit. The change of use will therefore protect the Grade II listed building as a heritage asset within the Charlotte Street Conservation Area;
 - the development will protect neighbouring amenities as previously described, ensuring the change of use minimises noise pollution within the locality, with the recommended noise mitigation measures to be secured via a condition of approval;
 - where possible the materials to be used in the refurbishment of the retail unit will be sourced locally.
- 6.38 The proposal is clearly a sustainable form of development and meets the criteria set out within the NPPF (2019), the London Plan (2016) and local planning policy, and should therefore be supported as such by the Local Planning Authority.

Impact on the Conservation Area and Listed Building

- 6.39 The Statement of Significance & Heritage Statement compiled by Architectural & Historic Buildings Consultants, contained within **Appendix B**, provides details in regard to No. 2 Percy Street as a listed building and the surrounding Charlotte Street Conservation Area. However, it should be noted that only minimal changes are proposed to the exterior of the listed building within the Percy Street frontage, with the shopfront to remain largely unaltered by the proposal and with the proposed changes informed by the neighbouring shopfronts of Nos. 3 and 4 to the northeast.
- 6.40 The interior changes are proposed to improve and protect the original historic fabric of the building, with the vast majority of the alterations to be cosmetic changes and designed to be easily removed without causing harm to the structure of the property.
- 6.41 Overall, allowing the proposed alterations will have positive benefits towards the upkeep of the listed building and wider public benefits of sustaining the local economy with the introduction of a viable business that will provide stable employment and a high quality service.

7.0 CONCLUSION

- 7.1 Given the information provided within this detailed application for an internal refit within the existing retail unit, it is asserted that the development ought to be supported as the proposed sympathetic changes to the shopfront and the installation of air conditioning units at rear of building can be accommodated without detracting from the listed building or its Conservation Area setting.
- 7.2 Great care has been taken to provide a development which will improve the interior of the existing unit, whilst respecting and protecting the original features and fabric of the listed building.
- 7.3 The Council seek to encourage new specialist shops within Specialist Retail Areas such as 'Fitzrovia and south-west Bloomsbury', therefore this investment in the existing retail unit to improve its interior specification ought to be supported.
- 7.4 There are no justifiable reasons to refuse permission for this development which will allow this unique business to establish a new premises within the Charlotte Street Conservation Area, as it will contribute positively to an area containing a vibrant mix of retail shops, service businesses and restaurants/takeaways, providing a service to the local community and visitors to the area.
- 7.5 Allowing the refit of the retail unit will enable the business to flourish, and will also have the wider public benefit within the Charlotte Street Conservation Area of improving the service to the local community, maintaining and increasing employment, and boosting the vibrancy and vitality of the local economy, whilst improving the interior and protecting the exterior of the listed building.
- 7.6 The National Planning Policy Framework states that decision-takers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible and that applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development, it is politely requested that this application is granted, with the inclusion of any conditions deemed necessary in this case.