

Odeon Cinema, 135-149 Shaftesbury Avenue, London

Brief for 'Heritage Review'

(DRAFT Brief to LB Camden 13 June 2018)

Background

Applications for Planning Permission and Listed Building Consent have been submitted to the London Borough of Camden for:

"The comprehensive refurbishment of the existing Grade II listed building and the provision of a new two storey roof extension and new basement level, providing a new four-screen cinema (Class D2) and spa (sui generis) at basement levels, a restaurant/bar (Class A3/A4) at ground floor level, a 94-bed hotel (Class C1) at part ground and first to sixth floors and associated terrace and bar (Class A4) at roof level, together with associated public realm and highways improvements."

The existing Grade II listed building (which has experienced the near-total removal of internal fabric as a result of two significant reconfiguration applications in the 1970s and 2000s) is proposed to be rebuilt entirely internally behind the existing façade, with the new-build structure within proposed to rise three storeys (plus plant overrun) above the existing 'box' of the building and new sub basement floor level. As part of the applications, a full Heritage, Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Building Condition Report, Need for Renewal Statement, and Viability Statement have been provided to the Council, to provide support to the following core proposition:

The applicant's views is that the existing building is in extremely poor condition and in need of repair and maintenance to prevent the building, a designated heritage asset, declining into a state of disrepair. Their view is that it requires substantial reinvestment to secure its long-term future, and a viable use to ensure its preservation in use. This view is formed by the Building Condition Report, by Hallas and Co.

The applicant's view is that given the costs associated with the necessary refurbishment works, the only financially viable means with which to deliver this is through the introduction of new commercially viable businesses. This would occur through the comprehensive internal refurbishment of the building, the provision of a new roof extension and through a new basement level. Their position is that the proposed floorspace quantum of the proposals is the absolute minimum amount that can be delivered while still remaining viable.

The Council have been advised that the current cinema operator (Odeon) has served notice to depart in order to relocate to open a new cinema on Leicester Square for the showing of new releases and the current cinema has always dramatically underperformed.

vidence is also presented by the applicant, separately, to demonstrate that the building in its current form is not usable by other cinema operators, and that extensive, costly works would be required by other operators to convert it into a form that would meet their requirements. The applicant states that these costs would exceed the value of the building as completed.

It should be noted that the Viability Report submitted with the application has been reviewed in full by Camden's appointed independent viability experts (BPS Chartered surveyors). Given that the necessity for all works has been founded on the Building Condition Report, by Hallas and Co., Viability consultants BPS has seen the Building Condition Report, by Hallas and Co and agree that the scope of works identified would make the continued occupation of the premises unviable.

Brief

The position of the applicant is that there is a clear and demonstrable Conservation Deficit that exists in relation to the building. The current building cannot be refurbished or conserved in a viable manner, as the costs of repair, even without the additional cost of reconfiguration, would exceed the finished value of the building. In order to be satisfied that this is the case, Camden Council are seeking a review of the information provided in the application.

The Council consider it imperative that the existing condition, requirement/extent and cost of refurbishment be verified/appraised from a heritage position and therefore a surveyor/engineer with a conservation specialism/credentials and ideally with experience of refurbishment strategies should be involved.

The Council is therefore seeking a third-party organisation to undertake a review of the submitted application information from an architect or surveyor with experience of and qualifications in, historic conservation, and the refurbishment and conversion of listed buildings. The works that are required at this stage are as follows:

- Undertake a full review of the following documentation submitted with the application:
 - Building Condition Report, by Hallas and Co
 - Design and Access Statement and scheme drawings, by Jestico and Whiles
 - Planning Statement, by Icen Projects
 - Need for Renewal Statement, by Icen Projects
 - Heritage, Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment, by Icen Projects
- Undertake a review, and understand, the following documentation submitted with this application, which provides useful background:
 - Viability Report, by Icen Projects and assessment of the Viability Report by the LB Camden appointed Consultants BPS Chartered surveyors
- Undertake a detailed Site Visit to review the current Site condition;
- With reference to relevant national policy and guidance, including Planning Practice Guidance section 18a and Historic England's Good Practice Advice (HE GPA) Note 2, and an understanding of the building's significance, produce a Report summarising your expert view on:
 - Proposed works: To help verify the conservation deficit, distinguish among the proposed works those which are necessary for repair, maintenance and reasonable refurbishment of the building, and based on inspection of the building identify other remedial works necessary.
 - Costs: Given your understanding of the building's condition, do the costings appear appropriate?
 - Justification: Noting particularly the need to avoid, minimise and mitigate harm, identify any conflicts with conservation of the building's existing significance

among the proposed works. Based on your understanding of the building's present condition and the costs and feasibility of intervention, do you judge a scheme which could avoid these conflicts and/or enhance significance likely to be viable? (PPG sec. 18a paras. 15 & 19; HE GPA 2 para. 26)