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OBJECTION to application to 'modernise' appearance of the Northumberland Arms public house, 119 Tottenham Court Road.

This objection is raised on behalf of the Bloomsbury and Fitzroy Square CAACs. The application site falls within the Fitzroy Square CA and falls within the setting of the Bloomsbury CA.

The historic appearance of public houses is of importance to Central London's conservation areas. Well preserved historic examples are an important feature in the street environment, and deserve proper conservation and protection. It is unfortunate that there are ever fewer well preserved examples, due to the cumulative effect of illegal alterations. Those that do retain some element of their historic appearance deserve protection and restoration.

The Northumberland Arms currently retains an appreciable amount of its historic character and appearance, despite being in a poor state of repair, and there appearing to have been an accumulation of small unauthorised alterations over the past decade (check Google Streetview). The proposed changes to 'modernise' the appearance of the ground and first floors would cause harm to its historic appearance.

We take particular issue with the extensive use of black paint on the ground and especially first floors and the removal of heritage style lamps from the fascia board. The design as a whole pays no regard to the historic appearance of 119 Tottenham Court Road itself and the wider historic environment. Particularly use of the black paint on the first floor would clash significantly with the white/cream paint used for detailing on the upper storeys of this building and the wider area.

The extensive use of black paint on buildings in this area at street level and above is also historically associated with areas of street crime and particularly prostitution / drug use in the red light district of nearby Soho. Accordingly it should be avoided in any development proposal.

We would recommend that any application to modify the appearance of this public house takes restoration of its historic appearance as a starting point, using the numerous examples throughout the Bloomsbury, Fitzroy Square, and Charlotte Street CAs as a starting point.

Bloomsbury Conservation Areas

Advisory Committee

30th September 2020