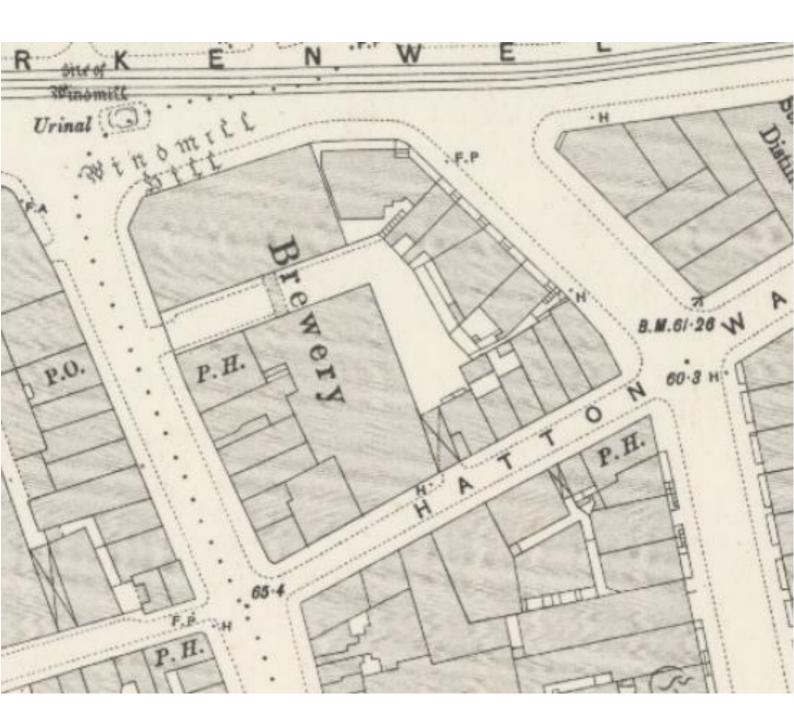


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1 Introduction

1.1 This Heritage Appraisal has been prepared in support of an application to extend and alter the existing building at no. 83 Clerkenwell Road, London, EC1R 5AR (the site). The appraisal should be read in conjunction with the Design and Access Statement and drawings prepared by gpad Architects and the Planning Statement prepared by Firstplan.

1.2 The existing building on the site is unlisted but forms part of the Hatton Garden Conservation Area. This report sets out the relevant historic development and special interest of the site and considers the proposed scheme against relevant historic environment policy, particularly in relation to the character and appearance of the Hatton Garden Conservation Area.

1.3 The Hatton Garden Conservation Area was designated in 1999 with the current Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy adopted in 2017. The conservation area covers a large area of c. 20 hectares and extends from Grays Inn Road in the north to Holborn in the south. The site falls within Sub-Area 3: The Trading Centre which comprises the grid of streets laid out by Christopher Hatton in 1659. The buildings in Sub-Area 3 are 'varied in period, style, materials and height.'

1.4 The existing building is considered to make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Hatton Garden Conservation Area.

1.5 As set out in Section 2 below, the existing building is actually a series of buildings constructed at different times. Lateral conversion has resulted in the building now forming a single unit. While the original buildings share common materials and height, there is no single historic architectural scheme or intent that has dictated the form and character of development on the site.

1.6 A scheme for significant alterations to the existing building, including a new entrance at ground floor level to Hatton Garden, internal alterations and new mansard roofs and rear extensions was approved in 2001. This followed various alterations undertaken in the post-war period and the granting of permission for the demolition of the existing building and the redevelopment of the site (8900528)

1.7 The existing building, identified as a positive contributor in the adopted appraisal, is therefore the result of the site's evolution since the late 19th century to almost the present day. The scheme now proposed is intended to encompass a variety of works (some of which have recently been approved under application reference 2020/2795/P). The current application incorporates these alterations and includes additional rear extensions. The Decision Notice for the recently consented scheme, approved on 6 October 2020, noted that 'the alterations and extensions are considered acceptable and would not harm the character and appearance of the host building, streetscene and conservation area.'

1.8 The proposals therefore involve:

- New small rear extensions;
- New roof terraces;
- Alterations to the lower ground floor windows;
- Alterations to the existing area railing plinth;
- New entrance configuration;
- New access stair to lightwell;
- New cycle store to the lower ground floor level; and,
- Full refurbishment of the existing building.

Report structure

1.9 An overview of the proposed scheme is set out at Section 3 of this appraisal together with an assessment of the effect of the proposals on the significance of designated and non-designated heritage assets. This section



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also considers the proposals against the relevant historic environment statutory and policy context (Appendix A). Section 2 sets out the historic development of the existing site and its contribution to the character and appearance of the Hatton Garden Conservation Area.

1.10 The following appraisal has been prepared by Kate Graham of The Heritage Practice. Kate Graham (MA (Hons) MA PG Dip Cons AA) has extensive experience in dealing with proposals that affect the historic environment having in recent years been Design and Conservation Manager at the London Borough of Islington and Senior Historic Buildings at Areas Adviser at Historic England. She also has an extensive background in research, in policy analysis and in understanding historic buildings and places. She has trained as a historian and has a specialist qualification in building conservation. Kate is also a member of the London Borough of Islington Design Review Panel.



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2 The site and context

2.1 The following section provides an overview of the site and its historic development. It also considers its contribution to the character and appearance of the Hatton Garden Conservation Area.

Historic development

2.2 The existing building on the site comprises a number of buildings now forming a single unit. The site originally formed part of the William Reid Brewery (previously the Meux Brewery and later known as the Griffin Brewery) (figure 1).



Figure 1: Goad Plan Extract of 1887.

2.3 By the time of the 1887 Goad plan, nos. 58a and 58b to Hatton Garden had been constructed. Both of these buildings now form part of the site. In 1887, the buildings are shown as separate houses. No. 58b (the taller gable fronted building to Hatton Garden) has a Griffin emblem to the gable and the date 1881 indicating that it was built just before the Goad plan was drawn up. The southernmost property (58a Hatton Garden) is likely to pre-date 1881.

2.4 At this time, the Goad Plan shows that the buildings continuing Hatton Garden towards Clerkenwell Road to the north and around to the Brewery Tun Building were of one and two storeys. The plan therefore shows an earlier phase of development. These buildings are also shown without lightwells. 2.5 Reid's Brewery dominated the northern end of Leather Lane and Hatton Garden and Clerkenwell Road and at the time of its operation was the largest in central London (figure 2). Reid's merged with Watney & Co and Combe & Co in July 1898 to from Watney, Combe and Reid. The brewery in Clerkenwell closed in 1899.



Figure 2: Birdseye view of the brewery, probably dating to the later 19th century. The existing site is at the bottom left of the image adjacent to the former Tun Rooms which still exists at no. 85 Clerkenwell Road.



Figure 3: OS map extract 1896.

2.6 The OS map for 1896 (figure 3) shows that the remaining part of the site had been developed. The map and historic floor plans (figure 4) of the building indicate that the corner red brick building (fronting Clerkenwell Road) had been built as a single element and that the remaining part of the site between the corner and no. 58b appears to have been built as two separate dwellings/buildings, each with a small rear projection. Figure 4 shows clear party walls between the various elements and each building had a separate roof form (figure 5).



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Figure 4: Ground floor plan of the existing site in 1969.



Figure 5: Hatton Garden elevation (2001)



Figure 6: Goad Plan extract 1934-1942.

2.7 Following the closure of the brewery in 1898, the site became a tobacco factory occupied by R Lloyd and Sons (figure 6). The southernmost building of the site to Hatton Garden (no. 58a) remained outside the site as



Figure 7: Hatton Garden, 1956.

an optician. A rear extension had been added to the site behind no. 83 Clerkenwell Road.

2.8 The site was still in use as a tobacco factory and warehouse in 1956 (figure 7). The glimpsed view of the building in 1956 at figure 7 shows the buildings as a group. There are large shopfront style windows to no. 58a and to the pair of buildings towards the corner. This configuration is shown on figure 5 and figure 8 below. It is not clear whether these large windows formed part of the original composition



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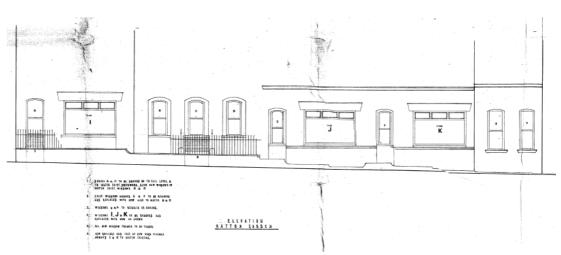


Figure 8: Ground floor Hatton Garden elevation (1969)

or are part of a later early 20th century phase. The main point of this however, is that the ground floor of the building has been repeatedly altered over time.

2.9 In 1969, alterations were made to the ground floor of the site's Hatton Garden elevation. All of the windows were replaced within existing openings. The doors to nos. 58a and 58b were removed and partially blocked. The existing doors in the building were added in 2001 when the doorways were reopened. Stairs were removed and railings were added to these areas.

2.10 The 2001 scheme (PSX0005408) made further alterations to the ground floor elevation to Hatton Garden. The scheme saw the reopening of blocked doors to nos. 58a and 58b, the reopening of blocked openings to the lower ground floor, replaced all windows across the elevations, provided new mansards and reconfigured the ground floor elevation of the building. The large shopfront style windows were removed: the northernmost was used to create a new entrance and elsewhere the existing pattern of windows.

Character and appearance

2.11 The ground floor of the Hatton Garden elevation is therefore much altered with a good deal of new fabric. The opening of the new entrance on Hatton Garden was presumably introduced here as the building affected was comparatively more prosaic and rudimentary than the corner block to Clerkenwell Road and adjoining buildings to the south.

2.12 The resulting entrance utilises an historic opening but its finishes and fabric are of little historic or architectural interest. As already noted in the planning application submission, the entrance appears outdated and the stainless steel finish is a contrasting modern material that while useful in marking a later intervention, fails to respond appropriately to the existing building. Other details such as the stair handrails are of a poor architectural and aesthetic quality.

2.13 The distinct buildings remain legible within the external elevations of the site. Internally, the floor plate is largely open plan although traces of the party walls at the southern end of the site remain.

2.14 At roof level, the building retains its2001 appearance as shown in figures 9 and 10.The 2001 scheme saw the approval of roof



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Figure 9: Existing elevation 2001.



Figure 10: Proposed/implemented elevation 2001.



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extensions to much of the site. These extensions relate to the character and appearance of the building and sit harmoniously on the host buildings and within their context. The 2001 extensions and alterations used traditional forms and materials that respond to the character and appearance of the conservation area (except for the treatment of the main entrance as noted above).

2.15 Alterations and extensions carried out to the rear elevation following the 2001 consent introduced a more contemporary character to the site. The 2001 stair core is clad in glazed curtain walling with the office extension constructed in stock brick. The latter introduced larger scale window openings to the site.

2.16 It also appears likely that the floor slabs to the existing building was adjusted at this time in line with the reconfiguration of the interior and its full lateral conversion. Certainly the 2001 existing drawings indicate a variety of levels that would have characterised a run of buildings constructed at different times and for different purposes. The alterations to the floor slabs have resulted in a very awkward arrangement to the rear of no. 58b with the floor levels running across existing fenestration.

2.17 There is a yard to the rear of the existing site but this is not publicly accessible. The rear elevations of the existing building therefore make no real contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area in the truest sense. Other buildings also fronting this yard, or forming part of this particular urban block, are partly characterised by modern development or extensions. The street elevations of the block retain historic or traditional character and proportions while the interior of the block is much altered with a largely contemporary appearance.

2.18 The area railings to the site run in two principal stretches along Hatton Garden and Clerkenwell Road, breaking at the main entrance. The railings have been altered over time with entrances to individual buildings infilled and reopened since the 1960s. The railings therefore comprise a mix of historic and more recent ironwork. The existing railings are set in a plinth that steps down from no. 58a Hatton Garden to the corner of the site. This has been altered since the 1950s as shown in figures 7-10.

2.19 The stepping in the wall, and the consequent stepping of the railings, marks the boundaries of the original buildings that now collectively form the site. Taller uprights and more distinctive finials emphasis this distinction and the location of multiple historic entrances. The existing railings obviously are intended to define and make secure and safe the lower ground floor areas. They are of three different styles, reflecting three different periods of construction. Those to nos. 58a and 58b are individually plugged into the plinth but those further to the north and on Clerkenwell Road are not. The railings generally add to the character and appearance of the existing building and of the conservation area as a whole despite later alterations.

Contribution to the Hatton Garden Conservation Area

2.20 The existing site is considered to make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Hatton Garden Conservation Area as identified in the conservation area appraisal. The principal elevations of the existing building relate broadly to nearby development in terms of scale, height, materials, proportions, age and original use. Lateral conversion has obviously altered the original interiors of the buildings but their individuality as historically independent structures remains somewhat legible to Clerkenwell Road and Hatton Garden. The external appearance of the buildings to the street clearly makes the greatest contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area.



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2.21 The existing site is of interest for its association with the former Griffin Brewery and for the long-standing association with the tobacco manufacturers: both once important central London industries and activities. This history is not necessarily manifested in the site's principal elevations - the buildings do not have an obvious industrial appearance and are more domestic in scale and character. The griffin plaque to no. 58b is one reminder of the site's 19th century history.

The stock brick elevations to Hatton 2.22 Garden are simply proportioned and detailed. They are slightly architecturally elevated with terracotta dressings and red brick window arches but there is nothing extraordinary in their composition or construction. The elevations to Hatton Garden are fairly typical of their period and lack any intrinsic flair or special visual interest.

2.23 The red brick building to Clerkenwell Road reads as the principal building on the site from an architectural point of view. It is still relatively restrained in its composition and form but the central gable, window detailing, ironwork and entrance treatment make this element of the site more distinctive than those to Hatton Garden. The rear elevation of this part of the site has a more contemporary character following the 2002 approval.

2.24 In summary, the building does make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area but this contribution is made principally by the outward facing street elevations. The rear elevations of the site are obscured from public view and form part of the interior of a block that is characterised by modern development and extensions. There is no interrelationship between the rear elevations of the building and the site as a whole.

2.25 As a building that makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Hatton Garden Conservation Area, the site constitutes a non-designated heritage asset. As

part of the conservation area, the site forms an element of a designated heritage asset. The proposals therefore need to be considered on these terms.



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3 Assessment

3.1 The following section provides an assessment of the proposals against the relevant historic environment statutory and policy context and the significance of the site in its context.

3.2 The current proposals have evolved through the pre-application process and during the course of the recently approved application (2020/2795/P). The following paragraphs reiterate points that have been made as part of a heritage statement supporting the latter and also include an additional assessment of the proposed rear extensions.

3.3 As noted in Section 2 above, the existing site is a non-designated heritage asset and forms part of a designated heritage asset. Policies in relation to both asset types will therefore apply.

Outline of the proposals

3.4 As noted above, the current application now involves:

- New roof terraces;
- Alterations to the lower ground floor windows;
- New entrance configuration;
- New access stair to lightwell;
- Alterations to the existing railing plinth;
- New cycle store to the lower ground floor level;
- Full refurbishment of the existing building; and,
- New small rear extensions.

3.5 The majority of these works as identified above have been approved
(2020/2795/P) following revisions during the course of the application. Since pre-application and submission stages, a number of revisions were made to the proposals. These included:

 Omission of louvred windows and doors to Clerkenwell Road elevation;

- Alterations to the proposed cycle store so that only a single access doorway is proposed;
- Revision of the previously proposed alterations to the existing entrance from Hatton Garden.

3.6 LB Camden's initial comments in response to the consented schem were critical of the design approach to the lower ground floor lightwell stair, the roof terrace and internal alterations. These and the above elements of the proposals are discussed in more detail below. The proposed rear extensions were considered acceptable in principle at preapplication stage. Although the majority of works have been consented, it is worth assessing these elements for completeness.

Policy context

3.7 The relevant statutory provision regarding conservation areas is established in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Section 72 of the Act sets out the in decision-making, 'special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance' of a conservation area.

3.8 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) establishes that in decision making with regard to designated heritage assets, paragraphs 195 and 196 could be relevant. These paragraphs set out that if proposals are considered to cause harm to a designated heritage asset, certain criteria apply. Where harm is substantial, there is a very high bar to meet in terms of justifying proposals. Where harm is 'less that substantial', this harm should be weighed against the public benefits that would be derived from the proposals and a balanced decision should be taken. It follows of course that proposals do not inevitably cause harm and that development can maintain the significance of heritage assets.

3.9 Policy D1 and D2 of LB Camden's Local Plan goes further, setting out that the



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council will seek good quality, contextual development that preserves or enhances the historic environment. The council will require that development within conservation areas preserves or, where possible, enhances the character and appearance of a conservation area.

3.10 Paragraph 197 of the NPPF relates specifically to NDHAs and sets out that 'the effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application...a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.'

3.11 Ultimately, there is a statutory and policy presumption to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of a conservation area. In doing so, proposals should avoid causing harm to the significance of an element of a conservation area that contributes to the character and appearance of the latter.

External elevations

3.12 The entrance originally proposed utilised an existing opening and involved minor alterations to create a larger opening that would allow the amalgamation of stepped and DDA access. The unification of access would clearly be a benefit to the existing building and its users.

3.13 The ground floor of the existing building has already been much altered. The original historic accesses had either been blocked or were inappropriate as an entrance(s) to a building of this size (a main entrance historically being on the corner of the Clerkenwell Road elevation). The 2001 scheme enlarged an existing opening at an appropriate entry point to the site following the lateral conversion of this group of buildings for office use.

3.14 The proposal utilises this existing opening and the revised scheme shows an

entrance that has been scaled back from the submitted scheme with materials and detailing that are far more sympathetic to the material palette of the existing site. Improved steps and handrails are introduced and the entrance has a more recessive appearance. In retaining a dividing pier between the two access points at the main entrance a greater degree of solid to void is retained.

3.15 LB Camden's initial consultation comments in regard to the consented scheme stated that the latter would destroy the composition, punctuation and hierarchy of the front elevations. The proposed alterations to the existing Hatton Garden elevation involve very limited change and are based entirely on existing site conditions. The ground floor of this building has been heavily altered and there is a clear logic and rationale for the works proposed.

3.16 The legibility of the existing buildings, their sequential development, materiality, historic significance and visual interest would remain unaffected. The site continues to have a late 19th century character but the amended scheme deals appropriately with existing openings using high quality and contextually appropriate materials and details.

3.17 Consultation comments also noted that the proposed stairs to the cycle store were inappropriate in this context. The proposed stairs provide a new access to new lower ground cycle store. This is a wider planning benefit of the proposed scheme. A stair below the level of the street providing access to a large lightwell is a very common feature seen across London in 18th and 19th century buildings. To see a stair in this location would not be discordant or harmful to the elevations above or to the character and appearance of a conservation area.

3.18 Importantly, the new stair, which would have a minimal visual impact and would not be seen above street level, clearly allows the use of part of the lower ground floor for cycle storage and associated facilities. This is considered to



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be a wider benefit of the scheme that should be balanced against the effect of the proposals on a NDHA.

3.19 The consultation comments also made observations on the internal layout. Of course, the proposed internal arrangement of the existing building would have no effect on the character and appearance of the conservation area or on the contribution that the building makes to that character and appearance. The reference to the internal layout is therefore considered irrelevant in this context.

3.20 The proposals involve alterations to the existing boundary treatment. The railings themselves are unaffected and are retained and reused in their existing positions. In order to improve light levels to the lower ground floor, it is proposed to reduce the height of the plinth to which the railings are fixed. The proposals involve the lowering of the wall/plinth as shown in the proposed elevations and section drawings. A plinth is retained but at a lower height.

3.21 The revised plinth retains the stepping down the street which, as identified above, is part of the aesthetic value of the site and one that relates to its historic development and interest. The separation between the original properties would be retained. Original entrances will continue to be marked and the area will continue to be well defined and protected. As already noted, the railings themselves would be unaffected and their existing characteristics, details and appearance would be retained.

3.22 On this basis, it is considered that the proposals would not cause harm to the visual or historic interest of the building or its contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area. In addition, this element of the proposals has the benefit of improving the quality of the lower ground floor office space.

Roof terraces

3.23 The LB Camden consultation comments in relation to the approved scheme go on to state that: '*Victorian buildings were not as a rule constructed to incorporate a roof terrace. The submitted documentation does not spell out why a roof terrace in this location is necessary.*'

3.24 The requirement for roof terraces will be explored further and justified in the accompanying planning statement. However, it is worthwhile to note here that the proposed location of the roof terrace is situated on a later infill extension to the site. The existing roofs in this area and to the Victorian buildings to the street are not original/historic and were added as part of the 2001 scheme. Roof terraces in the proposed location would not be visible and would not have any affect on the host building or on the character and appearance of the conservation area. It would not cause harm to the NHDA or to the Hatton Garden Conservation Area.

Rear elevations

3.25 The proposed rear extensions are located to the rear of the former nos. 58a and 58b Hatton Garden. The proposed extension is part 1/part 3 storey in height. The extensions will be constructed in stock brick with new metal windows with red brick headers. The scale and height of the proposed extensions were considered as acceptable in principle and as subservient to the host building at preapplication stage.

3.26 The new extensions are modest and have been designed so as to be complementary but secondary to the original building. The use of stock brick and red brick headers helps to unite the extensions with the existing building while marking them as new additions to the site. In the context of the rear yard and the centre of the urban block, the proposed extensions relate to the established character and appearance. The rear elevations are obviously not



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manifested on the street elevations and would not be visible from elsewhere within the conservation area.

3.27 As set out above, the existing building's contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area comes from its principal street elevations. Here, the story of the site's historic development as a range of individual buildings later amalgamated into one is told. So to is the relationship of the building to its context and neighbouring buildings through shared materials, detailing, scale, historic and current uses and general architectural proportions. These characteristics would not be harmed in any way by the proposed rear extensions and the contribution that the site makes to the character and appearance of the conservation area would be preserved.

3.28 The proposed rear elevations would also relate to local character and while they represent a change to the existing building, they would fit with their immediate context.

3.29 Importantly, the proposed extensions deal with the very awkward arrangement of the altered floor plates against the existing rear elevation. This is a poor detail that would be addressed by the new extensions. Such a detail highlights the lateral conversion within the existing building. While this is not wholly detrimental, it does undermine the apparent sequential development of the building seen in its street elevations.

Conclusions

3.30 LB Camden's consultation comments conclude that the proposals cause less than substantial harm to the existing building and to the character and appearance of the conservation area itself. Paragraph 197 of the NPPF relates to NHDAs but does not invite the decision maker to draw a conclusion on the level of harm caused. Instead, it requests that a balanced decision is made taking into account the significance of the site and the scale of loss or harm caused.

3.31 The current proposals make comparatively minor alterations to the existing entrance opening and improve upon its materiality, character and appearance. The revised entrance is a better response to the building that than existing provision. This area, together with much of the ground floor elevation, has been extensively altered and the loss of fabric of value is kept to a minimum.

3.32 The legibility of the existing buildings, the evolution of the site and its contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area remains legible. This is really where the significance of the building lies, together with its history which is less tangible in terms of the external elevations.

3.33 The proposed new stair to lower ground floor is an addition to the site which involves minor and easily accommodated alterations to the existing railings. It does not involve the loss of historic fabric and is a feature appropriate in a building of this type, particularly one that has an industrial/commercial past.

3.34 The proposed rear extensions will not be visible in public views or from the street. There is no existing appreciable relationship between the rear of the building and its wider conservation area context. To that end, the proposed extensions would not cause harm to the host building or to the character and appearance of the Hatton Garden Conservation Area.

3.35 The proposals will not harm the host building but will enhance its main entrance, office space provision and usability. In that, it delivers benefits that would otherwise not arise. It follows therefore that in not causing harm to the host building, the revised proposals would not cause harm to the wider conservation area. For these reasons and for those set out above, it is therefore considered that the proposals



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would accord with the relevant statutory provision and historic environment policy.



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Appendix A

Relevant policy context

The following paragraphs briefly set out the range of national and local policy and guidance relevant to the consideration of change in the historic built environment. The relevant statutory provision for the historic environment is the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

National Planning Policy & Legislation

Section 72 of the **Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990** requires that:

"...special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area."

The revised National Planning Policy Framework

2018 (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning policies and how these are expected to be applied. There is a general presumption in favour of sustainable development within national planning policy guidance. Paragraphs 189, 190, 192 and 193 are relevant to this application.

Paragraph 189

In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary.

Paragraph 190

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 and any necessary expertise. 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.

Paragraph 192

In determining planning applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

- the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
- the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

Paragraph 193

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.

Paragraph 194

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. Substantial harm to or loss of:

a) grade II listed buildings, or grade II registered parks or gardens, should be exceptional; b) assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, registered battlefields, grade I and II* listed buildings, grade I and II* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional.



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London Borough of Camden Local Plan

Camden's Local Plan was adopted in June 2017. The most relevant policy in this case is Policy D2: Heritage.

With regard to Conservation Areas, the policy states that the Council will:

• Require that development within conservation areas preserves or, where possible, enhances the character and appearance of the area.