



# UNION4 PLANNING

## **Jordan Design**

18 Grafton Mews, London, W1T 5JG

External alterations including replacement of windows and door on the front elevation, reconfiguration of roof terrace and alterations to roof and associated internal works

## **PLANNING, DESIGN & ACCESS AND HERITAGE STATEMENT**

**June 2021**



UNION4  
PLANNING

## Document Control

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## **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by Union4 Planning on behalf of Jordan Design ('the Applicant') in support of proposals for external alterations and associated internal works at 18 Grafton Mews in the London Borough of Camden.
- 1.2 The proposed development involves alterations to the front elevation including installation of new windows and ground floor entrance, reinstatement of first floor glazed hayloft doors, reconfiguration of the rear external roof terrace and minor alterations to the roof. It is also proposed to reconfigure the internal layout to provide improved workspaces on the ground and first floors to accommodate up to 20 employees.
- 1.3 The building was used until last year as a photographic studio, which had operated for many decades. The occupation of the building as a design studio will continue this E class use.
- 1.4 This Planning Statement provides a comprehensive overview of the proposals and includes an assessment of the proposed development against the relevant planning policy and guidance.
- 1.5 In addition to this Planning Statement, the application comprises the following documents:
- Application Form and Certificates;
  - Plans, Elevations and Sections;
  - CGIs;
  - Design Proposals Document.

### **Structure of this Planning Statement**

- 1.6 This Planning Statement is set out as follows:
- Section 2 provides an overview of the application site's location and description;
  - Section 3 describes the proposed development;
  - Section 4 describes the immediate and surrounding heritage context;
  - Section 5 sets out the policy context pertaining to the proposals;
  - Section 6 outlines the planning and environmental considerations which are pertinent to the application;
  - Section 7 provides a summary and conclusions.

## 2.0 Site Location and Description

- 2.1 The site is located on the east side of Grafton Mews which runs north-south between Warren Street and Grafton Way respectively. The building is adjoined to the eastern façade of No. 20 which covers over half of the No. 18 frontage. The two buildings create a sharp corner within the mews which briefly turns west where the buildings are joined and then turns northwards again as shown in the figure below.

**Figure 1: Site Location (boundary approximate)**



Source: Google Maps (2021)

- 2.2 The building was historically a stable building but was occupied as a photography studio for many decades, until recently. The building is now owned by, and following refurbishment, will be occupied by Jordan Design, a retail design agency.
- 2.3 Grafton Mews comprises a mix of commercial and residential properties. It is situated within Fitzrovia, approximately 125m west of Tottenham Court Road and 45m south of Euston Road. The area is densely developed and contains a large mix of town centre uses and key transport hubs including Euston Station, 650m to the east.
- 2.4 The site is located within the Fitzroy Square Conservation Area. The building is not listed however there are a number of listed buildings in the vicinity. Of particular relevance are Nos. 16 and 17 Warren Street to the north which back on to No. 18. Also of relevance are No. 15 Warren Street

and Nos. 159 and 161 Whitfield Street to the east which are located immediately northeast, as identified on the following extract:

**Figure 2: Nearby Listed Buildings (application site shown in red)**



Source: Historic England (2021)

- 2.5 The buildings fronting onto Grafton Mews vary considerably in character, with no overall prevailing architectural style. It comprises a mix of garages and commercial and residential frontages with a varied range of styles and materials including render and brick of a variety of colours, some of which are painted over. No. 20 which adjoins the site is particularly dominant given its prevailing height and modern appearance with a white façade and red framed windows.
- 2.6 The following image shows the range of styles and finishes to the buildings along the road and this variation of style and finish is set out in more detail in the 'Design Proposal' document which accompanies this application.



**Figure 3: Image of Grafton Mews (looking north) showing varying character**



Source: Google Maps (2021)

### **Planning History**

- 2.7 No planning history has been identified which pertains specifically to No. 18 Grafton Mews, however consent was granted in 2017 at 48 Fitzroy Street and 21-23 Grafton Mews (Ref: 2017/6044/L) which included a new brick built roof extension, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor rear extension and external alterations, amongst other works.

### 3.0 Proposed Development

- 3.1 The building has fallen into a state of disrepair and therefore the proposals seek to modernise and improve the overall appearance of the building whilst providing more efficient and usable workspace and making the building more energy efficient.
- 3.2 The proposals involve external alterations to the front façade of the building onto Grafton Mews, reconfiguration of the roof terrace including alterations to the existing roof and associated internal works.
- 3.3 It is proposed to install new floor to ceiling windows on both the ground and first floor facades. The windows will be placed in a similar layout to the existing windows albeit with larger glazed elements through the increased height of the opening. The windows will be crittall style with a black 19mm frame. The central first floor hayloft doors will be retained, in keeping with the building's original use as a stable and the window openings, currently blocked up, in these doors will be reinstated.

**Figures 4 and 5: Proposed front elevation (left) and CGI of front elevation (right)**



Source: Jordan Design (2021)



- 3.4 The left side of the building frontage will feature a more modern full height window which spans from ground to roof level. This will include an entrance door at ground floor level which is concealed



within the overall window design. The window will feature a yellow internal, anodised bead-blasted frame, adding visual interest and colour to the building. The outer frame will comprise patinated stainless steel.

- 3.5 The original hayloft doors are to be retained, however it is proposed to remove the existing panels which currently cover the window openings. The overall appearance of the doors will otherwise remain as existing.
- 3.6 A Juliet balcony will be installed at first floor level which will allow the hayloft doors to safely be opened to enable natural ventilation and cooling when required. The balcony will be finished in black to match the existing doors.
- 3.7 At present the roof terrace wraps around the building in an L-shape along the southern and eastern elevations. It is proposed to consolidate the terrace to the southern portion of the roof, closing in the eastern area to be incorporated within the interior of the first floor. The southern portion will also be narrowed slightly, again to allow for an increase in internal floorspace. The existing brick terrace wall is to be replaced by a glazed balustrade.
- 3.8 The rear mono-pitch roof will then be extended to cover the existing eastern terrace area and refinished with slate, as per the existing materials. The main roof will be also be refinished to match.
- 3.9 A sliding access door will also be installed within the western portion of the terrace which requires demolition of the existing chimney stack. The door will replace the existing window on this elevation, allowing for improved access to the terrace.
- 3.10 It is also proposed to increase the height of the main roof by approximately 265mm to allow for the installation of insulation. The roof height will remain below the existing parapet level however and therefore the overall height of the building will remain as existing. The roof will also feature an enlarged skylight on the eastern side to allow for additional sunlight and daylight ingress, as per the following image:

**Figure 6: Proposed Roof and External Terrace**



Source: Jordan Design (2021)

### **Access**

- 3.11 The current planning application does not propose any alterations to the existing access arrangements at ground floor level.

## 4.0 Heritage Statement

- 4.1 This section identifies the relevant heritage assets surrounding the site and Fitzroy Square Conservation Area within which the site lies.

### **Fitzroy Square Conservation Area**

- 4.2 The Fitzroy Square Conservation Area covers an area of approximately 6.9ha, extending from Tottenham Court Road in the east to Cleveland Street in the west - the boundary with the City of Westminster - and from Euston Road in the north to Maple Street in the south.
- 4.3 The Fitzroy Square Conservation Area appraisal provides a description of the character of Grafton Mews, with paragraph 6.32 stating as follows:

*"Grafton Mews is characterised by granite setts. It is home to a collection of brick-faced, two- and three-storey warehouses and former garages together with some new development (Nos 8-16). The east side is two storeys with vertically proportioned openings, and has a strong roofline with views beyond of the back of the Whitfield Street terrace. Nos 1 & 2 retain some of their original character. There is greater variation in heights along the west side with buildings of two, three and four storeys. At the southern end, the utilitarian rear elevation of the post-war rebuild of No 1 Fitzroy Square is visible. However the buildings maintain a consistent building line, and tend to have vertically proportioned openings on the upper floors and shallow brick arches to the window and door heads. The mews kinks at its northern end, where it is dominated by the rear of Duchess House at Nos 18-19 Warren Street, a taller 20th century office building out of scale with its surroundings (under refurbishment at time of writing)."*

- 4.4 No. 18 Grafton Mews is noted as a building which makes a positive contribution to the character of its immediate surroundings and to the conservation area as a whole.

### **Nos. 16 and 17 Warren Street and Attached Railings**

- 4.5 Nos. 16 and 17 Warren Street Grade II Listed terraced houses, built circa 1792 comprising 4 storeys and basements. They are constructed of yellow stock brick and stucco ground floors with moulded first floor bands and include details such as round-arched, architraved doorways with cornice-heads, fanlights and panelled doors.
- 4.6 The frontages also feature Grade II Listed attached cast-iron railings with torch flambe and urn finials.

**No. 15 Warren Street**

- 4.7 No. 15 Warren Street is a Grade II Listed 4 storey terraced house with cellars, built circa 1792. It features darkened stock brick, square-headed house door under blind windows and gauged brick flat arches to recessed sash windows on the upper storeys.

**Nos. 159 and 161 Whitfield Street**

- 4.8 Nos. 159 and 161 Whitfield Street are 4 storey buildings with cellars, now used as a restaurant, offices and flats. They were formerly 2 terraced houses built late 18<sup>th</sup> Century and altered in late 20<sup>th</sup> Century.
- 4.9 The buildings comprise multi-coloured stock brick, patched, possibly following bomb damage. No. 159 has a slate roof whilst No. 161 uses concrete tiles. Both have late 20<sup>th</sup> Century shopfronts with house doors to the left. Upper floors include gauged red brick flat arches to recessed sashes.
- 4.10 No.161 has vaulted brick cellars, round-headed arch with bracket and wreath and spear design and dogleg staircase with stick balusters and column newels. No. 159 has vaulted brick cellars and appears to have a similar staircase.
- 4.11 The ground floor of No. 161 and the basement of both buildings are linked with No. 15 Warren Street. The buildings have been included for their group value with additional listed building in the area which are Nos. 131-137 Whitfield Street. They are the only original buildings to survive of a terraced street, all formerly with early shopfronts, associated with the former Fitzroy Market.

## 5.0 Planning Policy Context

- 5.1 This section considers the planning policies and legislative framework which together provide the context by which a planning application would be considered. It identifies the national, regional and local policies which are contained within statements of Government policy and the Development Plan for the area, or which may otherwise be material to the consideration of the proposed development.
- 5.2 The relevant planning policies and guidance for the site are contained within the following documents:
- National Planning Policy Framework (February 2019);
  - The London Plan (March 2021);
  - Camden Local Plan (July 2017);
  - Fitzrovia Area Action Plan (March 2014);
  - Fitzroy Square Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy (March 2010).

### National Planning Policy Framework (February 2019)

- 5.3 The updated National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published by the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government in February 2019. The new NPPF retains a “presumption in favour of sustainable development”, with Paragraph 11 stating that *“For decision-taking this means ... approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay”*.
- 5.4 Section 6 of the NPPF refers to the economy and Paragraph 80 emphasises the role of Planning Authorities in helping local businesses to invest, expand and adapt:
- “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. The approach taken should allow each area to build on its strengths, counter any weaknesses and address the challenges of the future.”*
- 5.5 Chapter 16 of the NPPF refers to ‘Conserving and enhancing the historic environment.’ Paragraph 193 highlights that great weight should be given to the conservation of heritage assets when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of the asset.

### **London Plan (March 2021)**

- 5.6 The new London Plan was formally adopted in March 2021. It sets out the framework for how London will develop over the next 20-25 years. Its policies should inform decisions on planning applications across all the London boroughs.
- 5.7 The key policies which relate to the proposals are set out below:
- Policy D3 Optimising site capacity through the design-led approach;
  - Policy E1 Offices;
  - Policy HC1 Heritage conservation and growth.

### **Camden Local Plan (July 2017)**

- 5.8 The Camden Local Plan sets out the Council's planning policies which will ensure that Camden continues to have robust, effective and up-to-date planning policies that respond to changing circumstances and the borough's unique characteristics. It was adopted in July 2017 and covers the period from 2016 – 2031.
- 5.9 Key policies which are relevant to the proposals are as follows:
- Policy A1 Managing the proposed impact of development;
  - Policy D1 Design;
  - Policy D2 Heritage;
  - Policy E1 Economic development.

### **Fitzrovia Area Action Plan (March 2014)**

- 5.10 The Fitzrovia Area Action Plan (AAP) aims to help shape the future of Fitzrovia and ensure that development proposals bring benefits to the area and seeks to support sustainable growth at a realistic level and secure the most efficient and effective use of land, while maintaining what makes the area attractive as a place to live, work and visit.
- 5.11 We consider the following policies and principles to be of relevance to the proposed development:
- Policy F1 – Planning decisions in Fitzrovia;
  - Principle 4 – Small and medium enterprises;
  - Principle 9 – Residential amenity;
  - Part 5 Principles – Urban Design.



**Fitzroy Square Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy (March 2010)**

- 5.12 The Fitzroy Square Conservation Area Appraisal and associated Management Strategy seek to provide a clear basis for the assessment of proposals and identify an approach to addressing issues that have the potential to impact on the special interest of Fitzroy Square.
- 5.13 Paragraph 7.4 highlights No. 18 Grafton Mews as one of a number of buildings which make a positive contribution to the character of the immediate surroundings and to the conservation area as whole.

## 6.0 Planning Considerations

6.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states that, if regard is to be had to the Development Plan for the purpose of any determination to be made under the planning Acts, the determination must be made in accordance with the Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

6.2 This section assesses the planning considerations that are considered relevant to the planning application which are summarised under the following headings:

- Principle of Development;
- Heritage and Design;
- Amenity.

### Principle of Development

6.3 The site has been in use as a photography studio for over 50 years, providing a low level of employment. The applicant will continue this Class E use of the building, but will significantly improve the building and increase employment provision, with sufficient space for up to 20 employees.

6.4 Paragraph 80 of the NPPF encourages planning decisions that help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt and states that *"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."*

6.5 The proposals involve external alterations to the building which will in turn allow for internal reconfigurations to provide a more suitable working space for Jordan Design. In this regard, we consider the proposals to be supported by London Plan Policy E1 which encourages improvements to the quality, flexibility and adaptability of office spaces.

6.6 Camden Local Plan Policy E1 supports businesses of all sizes and seeks to maintain a stock of premises that are suitable for a variety of business activities and for firms of differing sizes. The proposals will ensure that the existing commercial unit is maintained and adapted to provide an enhanced and improved working environment. This approach is also supported by Principle 4 of the Fitzrovia Area Action Plan which supports small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and seeks to ensure that existing business premises suitable for SMEs are retained.

### **Heritage and Design**

- 6.7 The site is located within the Fitzroy Square Conservation and therefore the proposals have considered any anticipated impacts on the immediate and wider character of the conservation area and its setting.
- 6.8 London Plan Policy HC1 requires development proposals which affect heritage assets and their settings to conserve their significance. Similarly, Local Plan Policy D2 requires development within conservation areas to preserve or where possible, enhance the character or appearance of the area and states that the Council will resist whole or part demolition of unlisted buildings that make a positive contribution to the area.
- 6.9 The building is not listed, however is noted in the Conservation Area Appraisal as a building which provides a positive contribution to the area. The building however is falling into a state of disrepair and includes some more modern elements at the frontage which significantly detract from its character. The proposals therefore seek not only to modernise and improve the appearance of the building, but also to ensure that it remains an important and recognisable feature within Grafton Mews.
- 6.10 London Plan Policy D3 requires development proposals to respond to the existing character of a place and to enhance and utilise the heritage assets and architectural features that contribute towards the local character. Local Plan Policy D1 also requires development to respect local context and character, preserve or enhance the historic environment and comprise details and materials that are of high quality and complement the local character, amongst a number of other criteria. Similar criteria are set out within the urban design principles within the Fitzrovia Area Action Plan, highlighting that new development should respond positively to the prevailing form of nearby buildings and frontages in terms of scale and grain and other features identified as making a positive contribution to conservation areas.
- 6.11 The former use of the building as a stable is evident from the overall design which includes former hayloft doors at first floor level. It is proposed to retain the general appearance of the front façade, with a set of 3 windows and doors across ground and first floor levels. The windows will be enlarged and the panels will be removed from the hayloft doors to allow for improved daylight and sunlight, retaining the same overall layout as existing.
- 6.12 It is proposed to install a Juliet balcony outside of the hayloft doors to ensure the safety of occupiers when the doors are opened. The balustrade will be finished in black to match the colour of the existing doors. Whilst the balcony will introduce a new feature to the front façade, similar balconies are prevalent within the mews, as seen on the building opposite (No. 19) and a number of buildings

to the south. In this regard, the proposed balcony is considered to be a common feature in the area which appropriately reflects the surrounding context.

- 6.13 The proposals also involve painting the brickwork in black. Whilst this will alter the appearance of the building, painted brickwork is a common feature throughout London, particularly within mews developments and as seen within Grafton Mews further to the south where brickwork is painted white. As highlighted above, the mews does not contain any prevailing character, and features a mix of brick and rendered buildings of varying colours. It is also worth noting the modern building to which No. 18 adjoins, as it significantly differs from other buildings within the mews, featuring white rendered facades with red window frames and mirrored panels at ground floor level. No. 18 already features a number of black elements and overall, we do not consider that changing the colour of the façade will have any impact on the overall appearance or character of the mews, rather it will enhance the general quality and level of architectural interest.
- 6.14 The proposals have also considered any anticipated impacts on nearby listed buildings, namely Nos. 16 and 17 Warren Street, No. 15 Warren Street and Nos. 159 and 161 Whitfield Street, all of which are in proximity to the site and have views towards the rear terrace. There are no views from these properties to the front façade of No. 18, and thus there will be no impact in terms of this element. It is also the case that any views that include both the proposed frontage at number 18 and the listed buildings to the rear are glimpsed, and include only the less attractive rear elevations of the listed building.
- 6.15 The key element which is visible from the rear elevations of the above listed properties is the roof terrace. The terrace is to be reduced in size with the northernmost portion replaced by an extension to the existing roof and infilling of the parapet wall to the same height as existing, thereby meaning that there will be limited visibility of the new roof terrace from these properties and in reality, less than is currently afforded of the 'L' shaped terrace. It should also be noted that views are dominated by the blank flank wall of No. 20 Grafton Mews which will remain the dominant element in terms of views. Overall, we anticipate that the proposed changes will largely go unnoticed from these listed buildings and will have no impact on their significance, character or setting.
- 6.16 Taking all of the above points into account, it has been demonstrated that the proposals will have no detrimental impact on the setting and character of the Fitzroy Square Conservation Area and nearby listed buildings, and represent a design that is appropriate and reflective of the surrounding context. The extension proposed is low key and contained within the existing building envelope of the building, with roof extensions contained within the existing parapet walls.

- 6.17 We therefore consider that the proposals are in accordance with the relevant regional and local policies set out above, as far as they relate to heritage considerations.

### **Amenity**

- 6.18 Local Plan Policy A1 seeks to protect the quality of life of occupiers and neighbours, ensuring that development considers factors such as privacy and outlook, sunlight, daylight and overshadowing, and other impacts relating to amenity. Similarly, Principle 9 of the Fitzrovia Area Action Plan seeks to ensure a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings and prevent any cumulative harm to residential amenity. The proposals have therefore considered any impacts on surrounding occupiers, particularly in relation to the roof terrace.
- 6.19 At present, the roof terrace wraps around the eastern and southern part of the roof and it is proposed to reduce the area so that the terrace runs along the southern portion of the roof only. The proposals are therefore considered to improve the amenity of adjacent occupiers, particularly those immediate to the east, as any views to adjacent properties will be reduced. Any views from the southern portion of the terrace will remain as existing, and therefore there will be no impacts on any occupiers to the south.
- 6.20 A limited portion of the roof will be infilled above the existing eastern terrace, however will remain in line with the existing roof pitch. In this regard, there will be no increase to the mono-pitched roof height, and thus no impacts on terms of overshadowing or sunlight and daylight. The roof will be finished in like-for-like materials to the existing roof, ensuring that the overall appearance is maintained.
- 6.21 New access doors and a large window will replace the existing window to the roof terrace along the southern façade, allowing for increased daylight and improved access to the terrace. Given that this is simply replacing an existing window, it will not introduce any new elements to the south elevation or result in any views to adjacent properties that do not already exist. The new access door and window will therefore not have any impacts on the amenity of surrounding occupiers compared to the existing situation.
- 6.22 It is proposed to increase the height of the main roof height by approximately 265mm to allow for insulation to be installed which will provide significant benefits by making the building more energy efficient. As highlighted above, the roof line will remain below the existing parapet level and therefore the increase in height is likely to be imperceivable from surrounding properties with no impacts in terms of daylight and sunlight. It should also be noted that any daylight and sunlight impacts are already impacted by the much taller No. 20 Grafton Mews which rises approximately 4 storeys above the application site.

- 6.23 The roof will also feature a skylight within the eastern portion, however no views would be afforded to neighbouring properties given the height and orientation of the skylight.
- 6.24 Taking all of the above points into account, it has been demonstrated that there will be no adverse impacts on the amenity of surrounding occupiers, in line with the policies set out above. The proposals are in fact considered to improve the amenity of occupants given the proposed reduction in size of the roof terrace and reduced views towards the east.



## **7.0 Summary and Conclusions**

- 7.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by Union4 Planning on behalf of Jordan Designs ('the Applicant') in support of proposals for external alterations and associated internal works at 18 Grafton Mews in the London Borough of Camden.
- 7.2 The proposed development is minor in nature and involves alterations to the front elevation including installation of new windows and ground floor entrance, reconfiguration of the external roof terrace and minor alterations to the roof.
- 7.3 The proposed design and materials have been informed by the surrounding context of the site and seek to ensure that the setting and appearance of the Fitzroy Square Conservation Area and nearby listed buildings are maintained.
- 7.4 It has been demonstrated that there will be no impacts on the amenity of adjacent occupiers and in fact, the proposals are considered an improvement in terms of outlook and privacy.
- 7.5 The proposals seek to make more efficient use of the building, ensuring that existing office stock is maintained within the borough.
- 7.6 In conclusion, we consider that the proposed development accords with all relevant adopted planning policies and associated guidance at the local, regional and national level. Accordingly, we would respectfully submit that planning permission should be granted, subject to the imposition of appropriate and necessary conditions.