

Our Ref: 19398/KM/EC
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Planning Department
London Borough of Camden
5 Pancras Square
c/o Town Hall, Judd Street
London
WC1H 9JE

Dear Sirs,

BLACK BULL YARD, HATTON WALL, LONDON, EC1R 8JH
PROPOSED ALTERATIONS TO COURTYARD INCLUDING ASSOCIATED ADVERTISEMENT
SIGNAGE

We write on behalf of Fidelity UK Real Estate Fund, ('the Applicant') to submit a full planning and advertisement application for alteration and improvement works to the courtyard area to the rear of Black Bull Yard, Hatton Wall, London, EC1R 8JH ('the Site').

Planning permission is sought for:

Landscaping works to courtyard, new entrance canopy, improvements to existing cycle store and display of advertisement signage.

The following documents are submitted in support of the application:

- Site Location Plan
- Planning and Heritage Statement (included within this letter)
- Design and Access Statement, prepared by GPAD;
- Existing plans, prepared by GPAD; and
- Proposed plans, prepared by GPAD.

Site and Surroundings

The application site comprises a linear internal courtyard area located at the rear of 18-22 Hatton Wall, accessible via a gated entrance from 18 Hatton Wall. The courtyard provides primary access to the offices and flats at Black Bull Yard.

Located within the Hatton Garden Conservation Area, the courtyard is surrounded by existing buildings on all sides comprising commercial uses at ground floor level and a mix of commercial and residential units on the upper floors.

Planning History

A review of the planning history records held by the London Borough of Camden indicates a limited history in specific relation to the courtyard area. One application of relevance has been identified under ref: 2014/5873/P with planning permission granted in September 2015 at 18-26 Hatton Wall for redevelopment comprising retention of the building and replacement of western, northern and eastern facades, a three-storey roof extension, and single-storey extension to eastern elevation to provide a mixed-use building comprising offices (B1a), jewellery workshops (B1c) and 7 self-contained residential flats (C3). This application permitted a number of improvements to the courtyard including insertion of planters, in-built furniture and cycle parking spaces.

The neighbouring Griffin Building at 83 Clerkenwell Road is currently undergoing redevelopment including a rear extension fronting the courtyard (2020/4823/P).

The Proposals

The application seeks planning permission for alterations and improvement works to the courtyard area including:

- Repaving of the courtyard;
- Falls improved and new landscaping to direct water away from the office entrance;
- Recladding and replanting of existing planters;
- Introduction of additional planters along eastern boundary;
- Provision of new bollard lighting;
- Provision of additional benches;
- Erection of timber pergola;
- Provision of table tennis table;
- Insertion of doors to cycle parking area to improve security;
- Improved signage and legibility of entrance door with a new canopy and signage; and
- Erection of signage totem.

Overall, the proposals would enhance the courtyard area making it more user friendly whilst retaining the character of the Black Bull Yard development.

For the avoidance of doubt, the existing escape route from the rear of surrounding buildings through the courtyard would be retained.

Please refer to the enclosed plans prepared by GPAD which outline the proposals and provides a summary of the proposed materiality.

Planning Policy Framework

Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states that planning decisions must be made in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The National Planning Policy Framework ("NPPF") was published by the Department for Communities and Local Government in July 2021 and is a material consideration in planning decisions.

The statutory Development Plan for the subject proposals is the adopted Camden Local Plan (2017) and London Plan (2021).

The Council also has several supplementary planning documents which are relevant. This includes: Design CPG (2019) and Adverts CPG (2018).

The site has the following designations:

- Hatton Garden Area
- Central London Area
- Hatton Gardens Conservation Area
- Viewing Corridor
- Archaeological Priority Area

Given the site is located in the Hatton Garden Conservation Area, it is necessary to pay special attention to the architectural and special interest of the building as required by Section 72 (1) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Area) Act 1990. There are no listed buildings on site, nor is it located within the setting of a statutorily listed building.

Heritage Statement

In assessing the values which are embodied within the identified heritage assets, regard has been had to the heritage values as defined in Historic England's Conservation Principles (2008) together with guidance within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG).

With regard heritage assets, Paragraph 199 of the NPPF 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.

Policy HC1 of the London Plan sets out that development affecting heritage assets and their setting should conserve their significance.

Policy D2 of Camden Local Plan relates to heritage and the need to protect the historic environment. It requires that development within conservation areas preserves or, where possible, enhances the character or appearance of the area.

The designated heritage asset relevant to this application is the Hatton Garden Conservation Area. This assessment has been based on a site visit, existing published information and a review of the site's available planning history. In accordance with the NPPF, the statement is proportionate to the proposals put forward.

a) Character of the conservation area

The Hatton Garden Conservation Area is located in the Holborn district of Camden. The southern boundary is Holborn and Charterhouse Street, and adjacent to this boundary is the Chancery Lane Conservation Area, within the City of London. The eastern boundary is Farringdon Road, Herbal Hill and Warner Street, and adjacent to this boundary is Clerkenwell Green Conservation Area and Charterhouse Street Conservation Area, within the London Borough of Islington. The western boundary is Grays Inn Road and Brooke Street. To the northern boundary is Mount Pleasant.

Hatton Garden was laid out by Christopher Hatton III in 1659 together with Kirby Street, Greville Street, St Cross Street and Hatton Wall. The grid was subsequently filled with good quality houses, their plot widths proportioned in relation to the street widths, with the largest houses on Hatton Garden. Today, the only

surviving original building within the 'Hatton Grid' is the former chapel of c. 1670 at No. 43 Hatton Garden. A notable characteristic of the 17th Century Street pattern are the yards behind the main thoroughfare which were originally used for stables and later for industrial uses.

The jewellery trade began in the early 19th Century with houses adapted into light industrial uses, often with living quarters above. In the later part of the 19th Century the area was transformed by a series of road schemes that cleared slums and created development sites.

The Conservation Area Appraisal confirms that *"The character of the Area is varied, with no single period, style or use predominating. Yet, there is a conspicuously high proportion of Victorian former warehouses and twentieth-century commercial buildings, and a smattering of Georgian houses, all of which are the direct result of the history of the Area. Today there are a mix of uses, especially commercial and residential."*

The Appraisal goes on to set out that part of the character of the area comes from the activities associated with the Area, especially those connected to the jewellery trade, concentrated along Hatton Garden and its side streets. This includes a lively streetscene of small jewellery shops.

The application site is located within 'Sub-area 3: The Trading Centre'. This area is the heart of the jewellery trade. The Conservation Area Appraisal states that the principal feature is Hatton Garden, an unusually straight and broad for a London street. The appearance of this street is derived from the variety of properties, many of which maintain their original plot widths.

The appraisal goes on to confirm that: *"The buildings of Sub-area 3 are varied in period, style, materials and height. However, there is a noticeable proportion of Victorian warehouses/workshops and twentieth-century commercial buildings, plus some important Georgian survivals from the area's domestic past. Among these building types the most common materials are stock brick, red brick and Portland stone. The more formal and decorative buildings are concentrated here, particularly along Hatton Garden and Greville Street."*

b) Contribution of the Existing Courtyard

A courtyard has existed in this location since the 19th Century. The site originally formed part of the William Reid Brewery (previously the Meux Brewery and later known as the Griffin Brewery). An extract from 1896 is shown below:



Figure 1: OS Map Extract 1896

The courtyard was redesigned and repaved when Black Bull Yard was redeveloped in 2015 – 2016. The presence of a courtyard in this area is therefore considered to have some significance in relation to this historic urban grain. However, there are no historic materials or architectural features of note.

c) Impact of the proposals

This application seeks to retain and improve the existing courtyard area and any external alterations including the proposed new planters, furnishings and paving will use appropriate materials of the highest quality.

It is therefore concluded that there would be no harm to the Hatton Garden Conservation Area and that the proposed development would 'preserve and enhance' its setting, in compliance with Section 16 of the NPPF, the London Plan and Local Plan.

Planning Considerations

In addition to the impact on the Hatton Garden Conservation Area, other planning considerations include impact on residential amenity, transport considerations in relation to the proposed improvements to the cycle parking area and environmental considerations in relation to drainage and biodiversity.

a) Impact on Residential Amenity

The closest residential properties to the site are the two studio flats on the ground floor, accessible via the Courtyard's entrance. There are also residential properties on the upper floors of 14 and 16 Hatton Wall, Black Bull Court and at the fourth and fifth floor levels of Black Bull Yard.

Local Plan Policy A1 seeks to ensure that the amenity of communities, occupiers and neighbours is protected. This includes visual privacy, outlook, sunlight, daylight and overshadowing, transport impacts, noise and vibration levels.

In relation to the impact on amenity, the proposals are to enhance an existing courtyard space. The planter in front of the ground floor studio flat is retained to ensure that the privacy of this unit is retained.

The pergola, benches and table tennis table are located away from residential properties between the office uses of Black Bull Yard and 83 Clerkenwell Road. There is therefore considered to be no adverse impact on surrounding residents. Moreover, the 7 flats above Black Bull Yard have access to the courtyard and will therefore benefit from the improvements.

b) Cycle Parking

Local Plan policies T1 and T2 relate to prioritising sustainable transport in the borough. The cycle parking was installed as part of the 2014 consent and serves the offices. As part of the proposals, it is now proposed to enhance the security of this store by adding in entrance and exit gates. These will increase the intensity of use of the already provided facilities.

c) Environmental Considerations

With regard to drainage, improvements would be made to the existing drainage situation which would assist in directing surface water away from the office entrance to a centrally located drain.

In relation to biodiversity and urban greening, the proposals seek to increase the amount of soft landscaping and suitable native species will be proposed to benefit the biodiversity of the site. The proposals are therefore considered to be in accordance with the London Plan and Local Plan Policy A3.

Assessment of Proposed Advertisements

The NPPF clarifies at Paragraph 136 that the display of outdoor advertisements can only be controlled in the interests of “amenity” and “public safety”, taking account of cumulative impacts, as guided by the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007, as amended. The National Planning Policy Guidance (2019) provides further interpretation of the Regulations.

a) Visual Amenity

As noted in Paragraph 79 of the NPPG:

Amenity is not defined exhaustively in the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007. It includes aural and visual amenity (regulation 2(1)) and factors relevant to amenity include the general characteristics of the locality, including the presence of any feature of historic, architectural, cultural or similar interest (regulation 3(2)(a)).

Camden’s Advertisements CPG states ‘*advertisements in conservation areas and on or near listed buildings require detailed consideration given the sensitivity and historic nature of these areas or buildings. Any advertisements, of whatever type, on or near a listed building or in a conservation area must not harm their character and appearance and must not obscure or damage specific architectural features of buildings*’.

Additionally, ‘*the type and appearance of illuminated signs should be sympathetic to the design of the building on which it is located. The method of illumination (internal, external, lettering, neon, etc.) should be determined by the design of the building. Illuminated signs should not be flashing or intermittent, whether internal or external*’.

The proposed totem sign measures Height 1500mm x Width 200mm overall. It would be internally illuminated and be fixed securely to the existing private courtyard. The proposed signage has been designed in a sympathetic way to appear subservient to the surroundings of the courtyard and match the urban-industrial atmosphere. As an addition to Black Bull Yard, the sign would not create a cumulative impact on the existing streetscene and character of the area.

The advertisement by virtue of its size, scale and siting is proportionate in size and scale and would have little impact on the Conservation Area and will only be visible from Hatton Wall, some 22 meters away. Therefore, the proposed signage is considered to comply with the NPPF, NPPG and Local Plan policies.

b) Public Safety

As required by the National Planning Policy Guidance, the proposed signage would not:

- Obstruct or impair sight-lines at corners, bends or at a junction, or at any point of access to a highway;
- Because of its size or siting, cause obstruct or confuse a road user’s view, or reduce the clarity or effectiveness of a traffic sign or signal, or would be likely to distract road-users because of their unusual nature;
- Leave insufficient clearance above any part of a highway;

- Include external illumination that would be flashing, be a colour which could be confused with traffic signals/authorised signals, or because of their size or brightness, could result in glare and dazzle, or distract road-users.

For these reasons, it is therefore considered that the propose signage would not create a hazard to highway safety and complies with the National Planning Policy Framework, and the design advice set out in the adopted Local Plan.

Conclusion

The proposed alterations and improvements sought relate principally to the aesthetic elements of the courtyard. As well as improving safety and security for cycle parking, the improvements are considered to result in no harm to the conservation area and have been designed to a high quality using high quality materials.

The proposed signage also provides a solution to the announcement of Black Bull Yard and assists visitors to the office at Black Bull Yard in way finding. Overall, the proposal would preserve the setting of the conservation area, do not harm the residential amenity of surrounding occupiers and do not introduce a public safety concern.

We trust that the information enclosed is sufficient to enable the Council to process and determine the application. However, should you require anything further or clarification on any point, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



KATE MATTHEWS
Director

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