

Rosewood Hotel

Heritage Statement

Application for eyebolts for seasonal decorations

Site location: 252 High Holborn, London WC1V 7EN

Date: November 2021



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Heritage Statement

Introduction

This heritage statement has been prepared by the Central District Alliance (CDA) on behalf of Field & Lawn (the applicant) in support of listed building application for the installation of fixings for seasonal lights at 252 High Holborn, London WC1V 7EN.

Context

Field and Lawn work across central London to deliver seasonal light schemes for many public spaces including Regent Street, Oxford Street and the Strand. Lighting schemes are delivered through collaborative working with local councils, Business Improvement Districts, building occupiers and freeholders. The schemes bring a festive feel for the local community to enjoy and support the local area economy by attracting footfall to the area.

The Rosewood Hotel is located within the Central District Alliance footprint which seeks to support the local economy and community by installing seasonal decorations. 2021 will be the first-time seasonal lights have been installed in this location, spanning High Holborn in 3 locations, two of which are onto the Rosewood Hotel. CDA is working on aligned initiatives to support the community, active travel and develop projects to achieve the low energy ambitions by using low energy lights.

Structure

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that local planning authorities should require application to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected by a development proposal in proportionate detail. They should demonstrate sufficient understanding the potential impact of the proposal.

Heritage Significance

Site and Surrounding context

The Rosewood Hotel is located on the southern side of High Holborn in the vicinity of Holborn underground and Lincoln Inn Fields. The former London Head Office of the Pearly Assurance PLC and Grade II listed in 1974 with entry number 1378890. This reflects the buildings stature and quality within Holborn and the Bloomsbury Conservation Area. In 1999-2000 the building was converted to a luxury 5 Star hotel with bar and restaurant. Subsequent refurbishment work was done in 2013-4 with external lighting to compliment the architectural detail.

The Baroque style building rises to 5 stories with attics and two storeys of dormers. It comprises a central block and three subsequent wings focused around a central quadrangle courtyard. The frontage to High Holborn has symmetrical iconic columns and pilasters in granite and Portland stone. Its decorative Baroque style with high-quality detailed stone work are complimented by cast iron balconies, ground planters and window planters at first floor level. Some external light fixing has been installed in light stone colour which tones in with the surrounding stone. The building construction took place in stages between 1912 – 1962, with the front to High Holborn being the first.

The building is included in 'Bloomsbury Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy', (5.16912

The largest and most elaborate building in this stretch of High Holborn is the grade II listed former Pearl Assurance Building, at Nos 247-261 (consec), a grand Edwardian Baroque composition by C Newman dating from 1910-12. These office headquarters were extended at various times: in a similar style on the east side by P Moncton in the 1920s, with later 1950s extensions at the rear. Of note is Western House, Nos 245-46, a 1960 extension on the street frontage, designed by T P Bennett and Son in a contrasting modern style with a stone facade articulated by continuous ribbon windows (not listed). Vacated by Pearl Assurance in the 1990s, the building was converted by T P Bennett to the Chancery Court Hotel in 1998-2000. The near-symmetrical front of the main building is faced in Portland stone, and has a channelled grey granite ground floor, i) LON\NEW Bloomsbury Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy Adopted draft 18 April 2011 74 a giant Ionic order to the three upper floors, and two attic floors in steep pitched roof above a large cornice. A landmark feature of the building is the tall Baroque dome over the central arched entrance, which is visible in long views along High Holborn to the east and west. The entire building is set back from the established building line on the south side of the street, allowing for wider pavements, a row of street trees, and an increased sense of openness in the streetscape. From the east, this set-back also allows for long views of No 240, a lively, freestyle classical corner building dating from the late 19th century, which is clad in stone and topped by a dome with an ornamental lantern.

Significance of this part of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area

The Rosewood Hotel lies within the Sub Area 9 of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area which has a mixture of building styles, age, character and construction methods. They include materials including traditional red brick, stone with more recent additions of glass and concrete construction.

The majority of listed buildings in the area are of a smaller scale than the Rosewood Hotel. The conservation area appraisal notes a number of positive buildings surrounding the Rosewood Hotel

Over view of proposal

The application seeks permission to install sets of eyebolts in two locations which will be used for temporary seasonal displays. Each set consists of 4 plates with 4 eyebolts. A total of eyebolts are 32 proposed as outlined in the Design and Access Statement. The fixings at the Rosewood Hotel are one element of a co-ordinated area scheme which include decorative lights spanning the street, freestanding features and tree lights and lit street lamp columns, towards Farringdon.

In order to propose an appropriate method of installation the approach has been informed by advice from heritage stone masons, PAYE Stone and Restoration, one of the country's longest established companies in the heritage sector, specialising in historic façades & monuments.

The proposed method is common practise for stone buildings in central London providing a robust method which is unobtrusive when the fixings are not in use. A method statement has also been provided for the repair, once the fixings are no longer needed which uses a lime mortar with crushed Portland stone in the mix to provide a good colour match to the surrounding area. To minimise aesthetic detriment to the building, eyebolts will be positioned in the recessed joint section of the stone courses.

Policy Context

Planning Act 1990

Proposals for listed buildings and in Conservation Areas is set out in the Planning Act 1990 that is used to assess and authorise works. Section 72 of the Act requires that local planning authorities shall pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the conservation area.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2021, Section 12 sets out guidance to conserving and enhancing the historic environment. In determining applications, LPAs require the application to describe the significance of any heritage asset, their setting and the surrounding conservation area (para 128) with P131 outlining LPAs should consider:

- 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 viability; and
- The desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

Proposals that preserve or make a positive contribution to the heritage asset should be treated as favourable.

The London Plan

The London Plan 2021 is the adopted spatial development strategy for London and Chapter 7, policy HC1 C states, proposals should conserve their significance, by being sympathetic to the assets' significance and appreciation within their surroundings.

Camden Development Framework

London Borough of Camden's Local Plan outlines policies and guidance to promote good design, high quality places which conserve local heritage. Stated in Policy, D1 for Design and Policy D2 for Heritage which in summary proposals should be of excellent design quality and should sensitively consider the amenity of occupiers and neighbours and, particularly in conservation areas, the character, heritage and built form of its surroundings.

In order to maintain the character of Camden's conservation areas the Council will take account of conservation area statements, appraisals and management strategies when assessing applications.

To do this Camden will:

- require that development within conservation areas preserves or, where possible, enhances the character or appearance of the area;
- resist the total or substantial demolition of an unlisted building that makes a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a conservation area;
- resist development outside of a conservation area that causes harm to the character or appearance of that conservation area; and
- preserve trees and garden spaces which contribute to the character and appearance of a conservation area or which provide a setting for Camden's architectural heritage.

Listed Buildings

Listed buildings are designated heritage assets and this section should be read in conjunction with the section above headed 'designated heritage assets'. To preserve or enhance the borough's listed buildings, the Council will:

- resist the total or substantial demolition of a listed building;
- resist proposals for a change of use or alterations and extensions to a listed building where this would cause harm to the special architectural and historic interest of the building; and
- resist development that would cause harm to significance of a listed building through an effect on its setting.

Relevant planning heritage policy framework

The proposed development is in general accordance with the London Borough of Camden Local Development Framework Core Strategy, with particular regard to policy CS14 (Promoting high quality places and conserving our heritage); and the London Borough of Camden Local Development Framework Development Policies, with particular regard to policy DP25 (Conserving Camden's heritage).

The seasonal lighting scheme also supports Camden policies:

- Policy T1 Prioritising walking
- Policy C5 Safety and security
- Policy E3 Tourism and economy

As described above, the site falls within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area where it is described as the largest and most elaborate building in this stretch of High Holborn.

Assessment of Application Proposals

The previous detailed analysis of the site and buildings referred to within this Report has been used to inform the method and positioning for installation and removal of the eyebolt fixings.

The fixings are located in an unobtrusive location and will not visually detract from the building. When not in use the countersunk cover bolt will minimize them further.

The Rosewood Hotel will be included a seasonal area lighting scheme which will help the local economy and be enjoyed by those who live, work and visit the area.

The eyebolt fixings are considered to be less than substantial (NPPF) and provide public benefits including:

- Supporting local retail
- Supporting active travel
- Supporting the night economy
- A more sustainable and energy-efficient lighting design.

In conclusion the proposed eyebolt fixings are considered to be entirely appropriate and sympathetic to the character of the Grade II Listed Building and its location in the Bloomsbury Conservation Area.