

# Memo

**To:** Kate Henry  
**From:** Carol Cragoe  
**Cc:**  
**Date:** 06 April 2022  
**Re:** 2021/6259/P: 14 Charlotte Street, W1T 2HX

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Dear Ms Henry

The Applicant has asked Walled Garden Heritage to respond to the comments by the Bloomsbury Conservation Area Advisory Committee (“the BCAAC”) on the proposed mansard extension at 14 Charlotte Street W1T 2HX (“the Site”).

This note has been prepared by Dr Carol Cragoe, PhD, IHBC, an architectural historian and heritage planner with over 20 years of experience.

## The Site

The Site is a four storey building with ground floor shop fronts located on the corner of Charlotte Street and Windmill Street. There is a separate entrance to the upstairs flats. It is unlisted but is assessed as making a positive contribution to the Charlotte Street Conservation Area (“the CA”).

No 14 appears to date to the second quarter of the nineteenth century, probably c.1840. It has a single bay to Charlotte Street and two to Windmill Street. The ground floor is in use as a restaurant.

The upper part is stock brick with stucco dressings. The first floor windows have arched heads supported on pilasters, that to Charlotte Street is tripartite. The upper floor windows are smaller and simpler, with the surrounds supported on small brackets. There are rosettes on the cornice above the windows. There is a prominent stucco cornice and a storey band above the first floor. The bays on both facades are defined by broad, shallow pilasters, and the curved corner is defined by being recessed from the pilasters and by the break in the storey band.

The building has suffered from a lack of maintenance, and has some replacement windows, which are detracting features in the CA. There is also unattractive plant on the roof.

## Charlotte Street Conservation Area

The Charlotte Street CA (Camden) was designated in 1974 and extended in 1981, 1985 and 1999. It covers the east side of Charlotte Street including the Site. The Charlotte Street West CA (Westminster) was designated in 1974 and extended in 1982. It covers the west side of Charlotte Street including the area opposite the Site.

The buildings in this area generally date to the first half of the nineteenth century, with a few notable exceptions such as the flamboyant Victorian Fitzroy Tavern (unlisted) and the late eighteenth century Grade II listed Nos 7-8 Windmill Street. They are mainly four storey, two or three bay terraced houses with shopfronts, and were apparently mainly built as single units or pairs rather than whole terraces. The majority retain their original cornices even where they have been extended, giving a strongly horizontal character to the upper part of the elevations.

There is no uniformity in design or character, with a wide mix of façade materials (plain brick, plain render, and brick with rendered dressings), and a variety of heights with no uniform cornice line, nor any uniformity of storey heights or window alignments. There is also a range of roof treatments, with the majority having mansards but some, such as No 12 Windmill Street, having an additional flat fronted storey.

The overall effect is characterful and historic, as is recognised by the conservation area designation, but with the exception of the Grade II Nos 11-13 Windmill Street opposite, the lack of statutory listings in the buildings immediately surrounding No 14 also speaks to the relatively modest qualities of the individual buildings nearby.

The Site makes a positive contribution to this character, but it is not particularly special or unique among its neighbours. It is one of many similar, but not identical buildings.

In contrast to the assertions of the BCAAC, we do not consider that its lack of a mansard or other form of upwards roof extension makes it particularly special. The strong cornice lines of neighbouring buildings makes their form easily legible, despite any later changes to the roof lines.

In our consideration, the lack of a mansard is a detracting feature in the CA. The junction of the Site with the adjacent No 12, which is a full storey taller, makes an awkward gap is visible in longer views looking south along Charlotte Street in which the blank side wall of the upper part of No 12 towers over the Site at No 14. This is a detracting feature in the CA (Camden) and also in views from within the CA (Westminster). The blank side wall of the mansard at No 2 Windmill Street is similarly visible, and similarly contributes to the sense that this is a gap in the townscape.

## The Proposals

The proposals are for the erection of mansard roof with roof terrace above, and conversion from 3x self-contained flats to 2x self-contained duplex flat.

The proposed new mansard is well proportioned in relation to both the host building and its neighbours. It has a roof pitch of 70° on the lower slope and no more than 30° on the upper

slope. It will be clad in natural slate, with two lead clad dormers to Windmill Street and one to Charlotte Street, echoing the existing windows below. It is set back from the existing parapet.

Consent for a mansard was granted or recommended for consent on several occasions in the past including in November 1999, November 2003 (Ref PSX0204253), May 2007 (Ref 2006/4627/P), December 2010 (Ref 2010/2485/P), and November 2016 (Ref 2016/4651/P). In particular, the 2016 scheme was the same as that currently proposed. These consents were not implemented for various reasons, but nonetheless show the consistent acceptability of such an addition to the Site.

We note that there have been no changes to the surrounding heritage baseline since the previous consents were granted. The CAs were designated in 1974, and the nearby listed buildings (Nos 11-13 Charlotte Street and Nos 7-8 Windmill Street) were listed in 1987 and 1990 respectively.

The Local Plan was adopted in 2017, after the previous mansard was consented in 2016, but its heritage policies are not significantly different to previous heritage planning policies. It is also consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework (first published 2012, revised 2021). Therefore, the heritage policy context is essentially the same as it was in 2016.

## BCAAC Comments

We strongly disagree with the BCAAC's suggestion that a mansard is not appropriate in this location. The proposals closely follow the guidance in *Home Improvements: Camden Planning Guidance* (January 2021) the paragraph 2.2.2, with the slopes of the upper and lower parts of the mansard at 70° and 30° respectively, a generous setback behind the existing parapet, and traditional materials that are in keeping with neighbouring buildings. The new mansard also fills an unattractive gap in the roofline that detracts from the CA.

We are puzzled by the BCAAC's assertion that the mansard is at right angles and that this is somehow inappropriate as the building has a slightly curved corner. While it is the case that in plan the two sides of the roof meet at a right angle at the bottom, in elevation and in three dimensions, the natural inwards chamfer produced by the join of the multi-angled slopes produces a distinctly polygonal form as the roof rises. This shape is a traditional way of turning a corner on a mansard.

In addition, the angular shape of the mansard clearly distinguishes it from the slightly curved host building, clearly indicating that it is a modern addition. It is an appropriate response to the need for additional accommodation. It is also an appropriate response to the CA and the setting of nearby heritage assets.

Therefore, we consider that the BCAAC is incorrect, and that the mansard is entirely appropriate for this location.

Yours sincerely

Dr Carol Cragoe, PhD, IHBC