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Planning and Regeneration
London Borough of Camden
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FAO Kate Henry

16th May 2022

Our ref. LW/TB – 21/057
VIA PLANNING PORTAL

Dear Kate

6-7 St Cross Street, Johnson Gardens, London

**APPLICATION FOR FULL PLANNING PERMISSION TO PAINT A MURAL ON THE SOUTHERN
FLANK ELEVATION OF 6-7 ST CROSS STREET**

We write on behalf of our client, Johnson Hatton Office Unit Trust / Arax Properties ('the Applicant') to formally submit an application for full planning permission for the introduction of a mural wall on the side of 6-7 St Cross Street, London ('the Site').

The application seeks planning permission for the following development:

"Provision of a mural (11.2m x 25m) on the southern flank elevation of 6-7 St Cross Street".

In support of this application, we provide the following documentation:

- This Planning Covering Letter prepared by Iceni Projects
- Application forms, prepared by Iceni Projects via the Planning Portal
- Existing and Proposed Drawings, prepared by JRA
- Site Location Plan, prepared by JRA
- Letter of support from Arax Properties Ltd
- Street Art for Mankind – Generation Equality Murals

a. Project rationale and 'Street Art for Mankind'

The Applicant has been working closely with the London Borough of Camden ('the Council') on a range of asset management projects across the wider Johnson Gardens Estate since their acquisition of the site in early 2021. Johnson Gardens comprises The Johnson Building (77 Hatton Garden), 5 St Cross Street, 6-7 St Cross Street and Sweeps Studios (34 Leather Lane).

The interventions across Johnson Gardens have all been designed at improving the connectivity, flexibility and quality of the commercial accommodation within these buildings. This has included a focus on new landscaping, roof terraces and improved end of journey facilities.

As part of these interventions, the Applicant is now partnering with Street Art for Mankind, a UN-backed non-profit organisation that unites street artists from around the world, to deliver a striking new mural to the southern flank elevation of 6-7 St Cross Street, overlooking Leather Lane Market.

Street Art for Mankind (<https://streetartmankind.org/>) are partnering with Alice Pasquini to deliver a mural that celebrates a range of themes, including intergenerational equality, diversity in the public realm and women's rights. The mural has been designed to respond to the diverse history of Leather Lane, London's oldest market, which has historically been home to a range of diverse communities from around the world of differing ages and backgrounds.

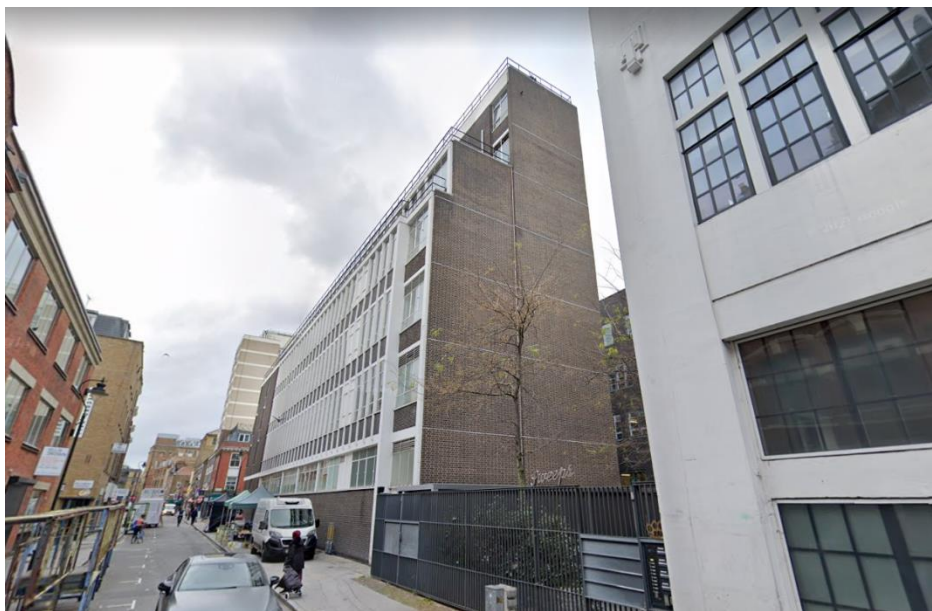
The mural forms part of the Applicant's vision to turn Johnson Gardens into a best-in-class office campus that not only provides great space and amenities for its tenants, but also interacts positively with the surrounding public realm.

The Applicant has discussed this mural with representatives in the Arts and Planning departments at the Council, local stakeholders including councillors, business owners and the Hatton Garden Business Improvement District.

The Applicant is excited to submit this application ahead of having the mural painted in the summer of 2022.

b. The Application Site

6-7 St Cross Street is a commercial building comprising a basement, ground floor and six upper floors. It has frontages to St Cross Street to the north and Leather Lane to the west. The southern flank elevation, which is currently blank and clad in brick, is the location of the proposed mural.



The Southern Flank Elevation of 6-7 St Cross Street

In terms of planning designations, the site is located within London's Central Activities Zone, Camden Council's Central London Area, and within the special Hatton Garden Area, an area designated due to its special character and renowned jewellery manufacturing and trading.

The site is also located within the Hatton Garden Conservation Area. 6-7 St Cross Street is not statutorily or locally listed, and the building is identified as making a negative contribution to the

character and appearance of the conservation area within the Hatton Garden Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (2017).

The site also benefits from a public transport accessibility level (PTAL) of 6B, indicating excellent access to public transport. Numerous bus routes operate from Farringdon Road and Clerkenwell Road, and Farringdon Overground and Underground Station is located within close proximity of the Site.

The site has an extensive planning application history, none of which are relevant to the determination of this mural application.

c. The Proposed Development

The proposed development seeks full planning permission for the installation of a mural on the southern flank elevation of 6-7 St Cross Street. The mural would have dimensions of 11.2m x 25m and would be painted directly onto the existing brick exterior of the building.

The mural (as shown in the image below) has been developed by Alice Pasquini and depicts two females sitting on a swing. The mural evokes a number of themes, including:

- Cultural diversity – as depicted by one female having an Afro-Caribbean background and the other female having an Asian background.
- Intergenerational equality – the two females within the mural are of different ages and generations, which symbolises the importance of achieving equality for different generations
- Women's rights and inclusion – the mural celebrates women and their role in public life
- The history of Leather Lane – the above themes also link back to the history of Leather Lane, which, apart from being the oldest market in London, has a history of cultural and ethnic diversity, families and children.



The proposed mural

Further detail on the proposed mural is provided on the existing and proposed drawings produced by JRA.

d. Planning Framework and Planning Considerations

The need for planning permission

The Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) provides the statutory definition of what constitutes 'development' and therefore what requires planning permission or not. Section 55(2)(a)(ii) of the Act makes it clear that the carrying out of maintenance, improvement or other alterations of existing buildings is not defined as development, so long as the works "*do not materially affect the external appearance of the building*".

It is noted that the judgement on what materially affects the external appearance of a building is subjective. However, the Applicant has considered that it would be prudent to apply for planning permission for the proposed mural, particularly given the site's location within the Hatton Garden Conservation Area, its size and its visibility from the public realm on Leather Lane.

The Development Plan

Although the Government's NPPF and Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) are important material considerations to be taken into account in determining planning applications, the planning Acts confirm that the 'Statutory Development Plan' should be the starting point for such decisions. In this respect, Section 38(6) of the 'Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004' (the Act) states:

"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."

The Development Plan for the London Borough of Camden consists of:

- The London Plan (2021)
- Camden Local Plan (2017)

Camden Council also have a number of supplementary planning documents / guidance (SPDs/ SPGs) which form material considerations for this application. These documents are known as Camden Planning Guidance (CPG)

The relevant CPG for the assessment and determination of this application is the Artworks, Statues and Memorials CPG (March 2019). This CPG lists the specific requirements that the Council would consider in assessing and determining this mural application.

An assessment of the relevant planning considerations for the development are provided below.

The principle of development, design and heritage

Policy D1 of the Local Plan (2017) notes that the Council will seek to secure high quality design in development that respects local context and character, preserves or enhances the historic environment and heritage assets, is sustainable in design and construction, comprises details and materials that of high quality and integrates well with surrounding streets and open spaces.

Policy D2 of the Local Plan (2017) sets out that the Council will preserve and, where appropriate, enhance Camden's rich and diverse heritage assets and their settings, including conservation areas, listed buildings, archaeological remains, scheduled ancient monuments, historic parks and gardens and locally listed heritage assets.

In addition, the Hatton Garden Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (2017) defines 6-7 St Cross Street as making a negative contribution to the conservation area. It also identifies the area between 6-7 St Cross Street and Sweeps Studios (34 Leather Lane) as a development opportunity.

In this context, the proposed mural is considered to comply with these relevant policies of the development plan in the following ways:

- The mural would be painted by an award-winning local artist, backed by Street Art for Mankind, a not-for-profit organisation backed by the United Nations. They have successfully commissioned high-quality, striking mural across the world that evoke a range of important themes that are prescient in society.
- The size and siting of the mural has been designed to maximise the visibility of the mural, while also balancing the need to respect the existing building.
- The mural is located on a blank façade that does not make any meaningful contribution to the townscape or streetscene.
- The mural is proposed to a building that is identified as making a negative contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area and in an area defined as a development opportunity. The mural can therefore act as a catalyst to improve this area of the conservation area, enhancing its contribution to the wider Hatton Garden Conservation Area.

The principle of the proposed mural, as well as its compliance with Policy D1 and D2 of the Local Plan is therefore considered acceptable.

Artworks, Statues and Memorials CPG Assessment

The Artworks, Statues and Memorials CPG (2019) explains that the Council's approach to considering applications for murals would be informed by the Council's Corporate Guidance entitled 'New statues, memorials and artworks in parks, open spaces and the public highway in Camden'.

This Guidance applies to all artworks and requires the proposed artwork to respond to a number of principles.

An assessment of the proposed mural against these principles is provided below:

Site specificity and context

The artwork has a historical background and the people surrounding the area. In particular, the Leather Lane market has always had "a mixture of everybody because the streets are for everyone to work" so many migrants felt welcomed to work in the market as there was a lot of support throughout the neighbourhood.

The two girls in the design link into the context of the area as they're both supporting each other and are from different cultures which relates to the migrants that came together as one. It can be viewed as appropriate as it commemorates how the neighbourhood used to come together as a "big family" back in the 19th century.

20 year principle

This does not apply to this design as the artwork is not a particular individual and is not a statue or a memorial.

Saturation areas

The area in which this design will be created does not have a high concentration of other artworks, statues, or memorials.

Quality

The artists that voluntarily came forward to create this artwork are a professional mural company called “Street Art for Mankind” who work closely with the UN and have completed projects all over the world like New York, Brussels, Mexico, Paris and many more. The artwork would be of the highest quality.

Diversity

Street Art for Mankind aim to trigger social change and to bond communities. They believe they can do this through this artwork as the design is two girls both from diverse backgrounds, coming together to support each other. The two girls sitting on the swing symbolises them bonding and getting along whilst supporting and spreading love which links to red love hearts floating around in the design.

Camden is a diverse borough with many different ethnicities and people of background, a large number of which have historically worked and visited Leather Lane.

Safety

The mural wall would be provided on private land and the general public would not be able to access the mural. The safety, security and avoidance of the ability for graffiti to occur has informed the siting of the mural.

Support

The proposed mural has been discussed with a number of individuals, stakeholders and groups. Support for the mural has come from:

- The landowner of the Johnson Gardens Estate – a letter of support is enclosed
- Hatton Garden Business Improvement District – provided the following words of support: *“Hatton Garden Business Improvement District is strongly in favour of Arax Properties’ proposal to install a mural on the Johnson Garden’s development. Not only will the mural bring a much-needed boost of colour and vibrancy to the Leather Lane streetscape, the artwork reflects the diverse nature of the borough and sends a positive message regarding equality and opportunity, which strongly aligns with Hatton Garden BID principles.”*
- Mike Candler, Arts Development Manager at Camden Council – support was provided via a meeting in April 2022
- Local ward councillors – the proposed mural has also been discussed with the local ward councillors.

The Applicant shall continue to engage with the community about the mural and can provide further letters of support when they are obtained.

Maintenance and sustainability

Like all of the Street Art for Mankind murals, they are of upmost quality, requiring minimal maintenance and upkeep.

It is also noted that this mural is provided on private land and can be maintained by the current owners of 6-7 St Cross Street, without additional cost to the public purse.

Conclusion

Overall, the proposed mural is therefore considered to align with the various principles contained within the Council’s corporate guidance and the Artworks, Statues and Memorials CPG (2019).

e. Conclusion

These proposals are very exciting and the Applicant is pleased to submit this planning application to the Council. This application has followed an extensive engagement process with key stakeholders and is considered to represent a new high-quality piece of public art that would be viewed by a wide range of residents and workers within the London Borough of Camden.

The Applicant is excited to deliver this mural and looks forward to working with the Council to allow this objective to be realised.

We trust the enclosed is sufficient for your current purposes and we look forward to receiving confirmation that the application has been registered and validated. In the meantime, please contact Lewis Westhoff (lwesthoff@iceniprojects.com 07557 678 587) or Tasha Bullen (tbullen@iceniprojects.com 07881 490 480).

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Iceniprojects Ltd." in a cursive, slightly stylized font.

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