

## 16 – 24 WHITFIELD STREET LONDON W1T 2RA

### DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

#### 1. Existing site and building context

##### Site and surrounding area

The application site lies between the west side of Tottenham Court Road ('TCR') and the east side of Whitfield Street in Fitzrovia, within the Charlotte Street Conservation Area. The surrounding area contains a mix of retail, office, service and residential uses.

The site is bounded on its eastern side by 60 Tottenham Court Road to the north and Kirkman Place, a pedestrian cul de sac, to the south. On the Whitfield Street side to the west, 26-28 Whitfield Street lies to the north and 12-14 Whitfield Street to the south.

Opposite on the west side of Whitfield Street is a public open space managed by LB Camden known as Crabtree Fields. A modern Grade II listed property at 1 Colville Place overlooks this space and is in close proximity to the site.

##### Site history

Planning permission for this scheme as built was granted by LB Camden dated 20 November 2000 (reference PS9904472/R3) and described in the following terms:

*Redevelopment of the site to form a mixed use development with a British Transport Police Station and headquarters building on basement, ground and first to third floors (both sui generis use) with pedestrian and vehicle entrances on Whitfield Street, together with Class A1 retail use on the basement, ground and first floors of the Tottenham Court Road frontage, with plant on the first and fourth floors, as shown by drawing numbers [as listed] and all documents and letters listed in the Schedule of documentation dated 24 February 2000.*

##### Existing building

The application premises were occupied by the British Transport Police (BTP) from circa 2003 until 1 May 2022.

They extend to some 3,864 sqm gross, on basement, ground and 3 upper floors, together with a rooftop plant room, as shown in the existing as built plans submitted with this application.

Separate pedestrian entrances were provided to the police station and headquarters elements, befitting their separate functions, although there is internal linkage to facilitate ease of movement.

Basement parking is provided for some 13 vehicles, accessed via a ramp exiting directly onto Whitfield Street via a roller shutter door. There is also an incident vehicle dock on Whitfield Street and dedicated on street bays for police vehicles.

The police station element of the use was confined to the ground floor and basement, including such obviously bespoke areas as interview rooms, cells, dog kennels and vehicle dock. On the upper floors the BTP headquarters offices are specified as conventional office type accommodation.

## **2. Pre-application discussion**

Alan Cook Consultancy initially submitted a pre-application enquiry on 13 November 2021 under ref 2021/5701/PRE. A pre-app meeting was held in January 2022 when the change of use was discussed.

The change of use planning application (Scheme A) was submitted in February 2022.

The initial preapp response letter was issued on 11 March 2022 when amendments were requested to the 4<sup>th</sup> floor level extension (see para 5.4 of the letter) forming part of Scheme B.

Further pre-app material for Scheme B was submitted on 29 April 2022 (ref 2022/1893/PRE) and Camden's final preapp response was received on 19 May 2022.

The case officer confirmed that the roof extensions are likely to be supported and advised going ahead with the application for the extensions for office use. This application covers these extensions and the change of use of the ancillary retail area at first floor level to offices and is known as Scheme B.

## **3. Design Proposal**

### **Scope**

With the building having been occupied by BTP since its inception in 2003, there are a number of areas of the existing that require updating. The bespoke nature of the original BTP fit out has left constraints and purpose-built elements that are inappropriate for a contemporary current office occupier and these are addressed in the current planning application for Scheme A ref 2022/0568/P.

The focus of the Scheme B scope has been to continue to create a better relationship with the street scene and the public realm opposite and to improve office amenity areas with new terraces.

Features include –

- 2 areas of floor area extensions at 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>
- 1 area of change of use at 1<sup>st</sup> floor level and consequential external alterations
- Landscaping to amenity areas
- New more efficient screened plant enclosures
- External new west facing amenity terraces
- New accesses to roof plant

### **Use and amount**

The increase in built office GIA is less than 200 sq m

## **Scale**

The overall scale of the building perceived from pavement/street/public open space level on the Whitfield Street and TCR frontages remains largely as it is, with the extensions not being perceived from these viewpoints as the Crabtree Fields briefing note shows.

## **Layout and access**

Access to the building is in a similar position as currently with the elimination of the police station entrance.

The new 4<sup>th</sup> floor is serviced from the main core.

The 2nd floor extension on Whitfield Street is accessed and forms part of the main existing 2nd floor floorplate.

The area of change of use will be accessed from the existing 1<sup>st</sup> floor office.

## **Appearance**

There is currently no engagement between the building and the public realm on Whitfield Street. The new enlarged entrance will have a more open appearance from Whitfield Street and the Crabtree Fields briefing note demonstrates the acceptability of the new 4<sup>th</sup> floor from Crabtree Fields.

# **4. Access**

## **Access statement**

16 – 24 Whitfield Street has been designed to be an accessible environment, meeting the needs of all potential users. Removing barriers that create undue effort, separation or special treatment, everyone, regardless of disability, age or gender will be able to use the building equally, confidently and independently.

16 – 24 Whitfield Street and its immediate surroundings will incorporate:

- Suitable means of access for all people at the entrance points
- Routes and access ways sufficiently wide to allow people to pass each other, with the minimum of level change
- Principal entrances and lobbies that are identifiable and accessible
- Independent horizontal and vertical movement that is convenient and ensures that people can make use of all relevant facilities

## **Access into the Building**

**Offices** – the new main office entrance will be on Whitfield Street and makes use of the existing recess in the elevation that is now used by the escape doors, at the east end of the building. This connects into a new entrance lobby area and the existing main lifts of the building. The current doors previously used by the police station are replaced with curtain walling and form a new façade to the office reception space and workspace that will now

overlooks Whitfield Street. The glazed mosaic feature panels can remain as a feature of the elevation.

**Cycle parking** – a new basement cycle park is provided as part of the redesign. The existing vehicular doors on Whitfield Street, doors to the ramp and basement car park are replaced with pedestrian doors and curtain walling. There is an internal lobby area and a new large format lift is provided for bicycle and refuse/ bin access. The layout is providing cycle spaces in accordance with the transport assessment from Milestone, including dedicated showers, WC's, lockers.

**Refuse** – Access is shared with the bicycle route; the refuse store is located within a separated secure area in the basement. The lobby area on the ground floor can, if required, provide a marshalling area for the bins whilst they are moved from collection to storage.

**Servicing** – The existing Whitfield Street access arrangement forms the service access to the building; this is set out in detail in the transport assessment.

**Retail areas** – No changes are proposed at ground and basement and consequently the access and service and arrangements remain as existing.

#### **Façade cleaning and maintenance**

The existing building has openable windows, and all areas, both externally and internally are currently cleaned from the interior of the building.

The new extended area on the second floor will also have similar opening windows and will be cleaned in a similar way. The new 4<sup>th</sup> floor area will either be surrounded by footways or terraces providing safe access, or in addition, there is an existing man safe cable system on the roof for roof general maintenance. This will be adapted and extended if required to provide safe cleaning access therefore access proved to all windows on the extended scheme.

The façade of the fourth floor will be similarly accessed from man safe or terraces, the second floor is brick construction with openable windows to match the existing building, so windows can be cleaned from the inside of the building.

**Studio cf and ACC**

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