

194 Shaftesbury Avenue, WC2H 8JP, London

CBRE / Design and Access Statement

July 2022

Client: Grafton Real Estate Limited

Planning Consultant: CBRE Ltd



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Figure 1 Aerial Photograph of the Site

Introduction

Purpose of Statement

This design and access statement has been prepared on behalf of Grafton Real Estate Limited to accompany a detailed planning application for proposed remodeling and change of use to lower ground and upper floors to Use Class C1 at 194 Shaftesbury Avenue, London, WC2H 8JP. This will hereafter be referred to as 'The Site'.

The description of the development is as follows:

"Use of ground floor as Class E café, change of use of lower ground and 1st-3rd floors to serviced apartments, inclusion of rear dormer extension for 4th floor serviced apartments, demolition and rebuild of rear lower ground and ground floor, minor external alterations including creation of rear courtyard at lower ground floor level and associated works".

Document Overview

This document describes the site context, the proposals, design principles and access strategy.

This design and access statement should be read in conjunction with the accompanying architectural drawings. The other documents submitted as part of this application include:

- Cover Letter
- Land use statement
- Existing Drawings and Demolition Drawings
- Proposed Drawings

Proposals

The full planning application includes details of the proposed development. In summary, the basement and upper floors are to be remodelled to be used as serviced apartments (Use Class C1), with the ground floor remaining within Use Class E, for use as a café. This will be available to be used by both serviced apartment guests and the general public. The proposed development also includes a rear dormer extension on the fourth floor, the demolition and rebuilding of the existing rear lower ground and ground floor extension and minor external alterations, including the creation of a rear courtyard at lower ground floor level for the adjacent serviced apartment.

Context

Site Location

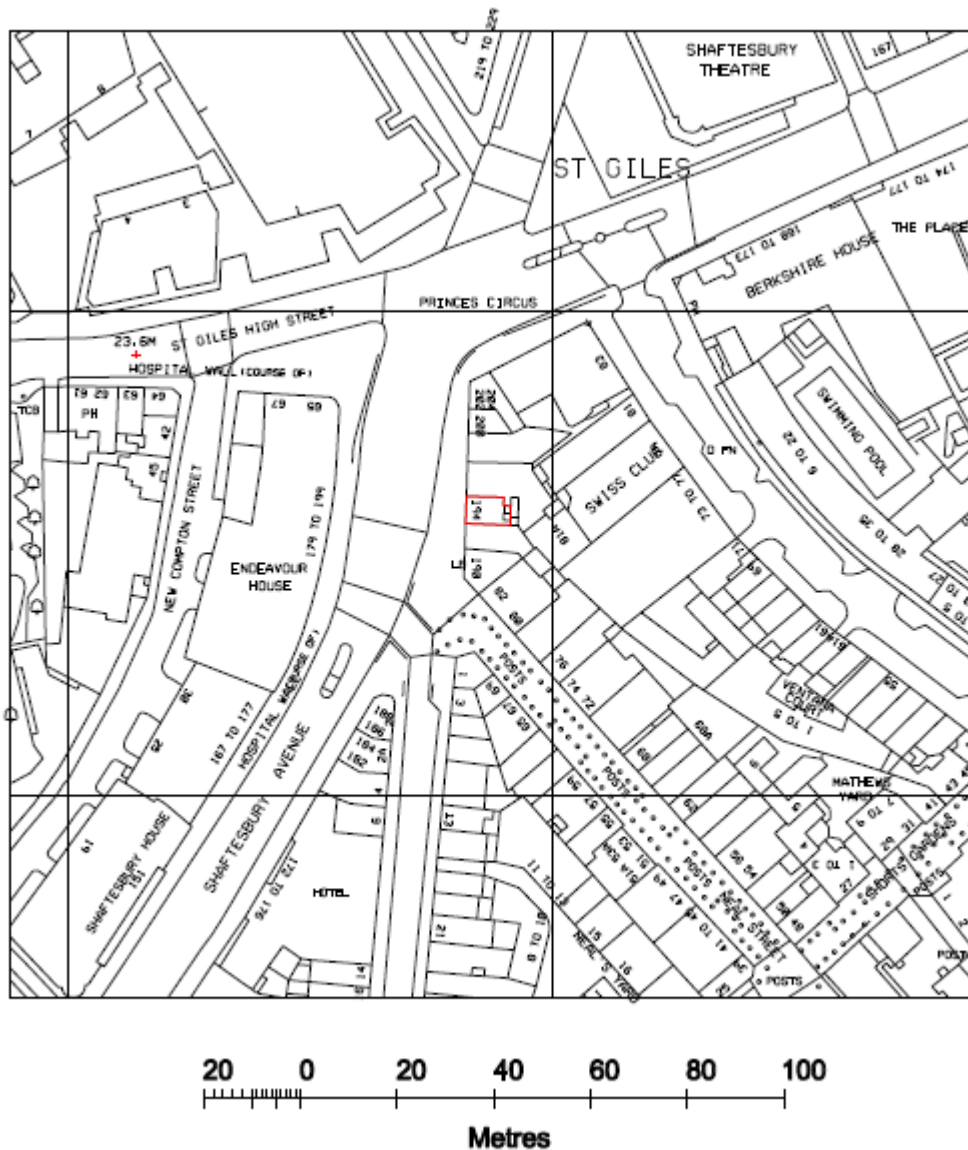


Figure 2 Site Location Plan. Source: Mouskos Architects

The Site is located on the eastern side of Shaftesbury Avenue, with the junction to High Holborn slightly north of the site. The Site is located within a Secondary Shopping Frontage within the Covent Garden area of Central London.

The Site is located within the Seven Dials (Covent Garden) Conservation Area. The building on the Site is not listed although is identified as a positive contributor to the Conservation Area (Nos. 190-204 are all identified as positive contributors).

Site Description and Surroundings

The area is well served by public transport and the Site benefits from a public transport accessibility level ('PTAL') of 6b, which is the highest possible rating. Therefore, it is considered to have an excellent level of access to public

transport. The Site is located between Tottenham Court Road (served by the Elizabeth Line, the Northern Line and the Central Line) and Holborn tube stations (served by the Central and Piccadilly Lines).

Seven Dials (Covent Garden) Conservation Area Statement

The surrounding area is characterised by a range and mix of building types and uses and street layout. There is not one dominant period of style of building. The Seven Dials (Covent Garden) Conservation Area Statement notes that Shaftesbury Avenue is an important central London Avenue, with a distinctive scale of buildings and use of materials. London Plane trees line the Avenue and are considered to be a distinctive feature. The Statement goes on to state that the mixed use nature of the area is widely acknowledged for maintaining the vitality of the area.

Site History

The existing building is currently vacant and was last used as a Class E retail use over basement, ground and three upper levels. The previous occupier of the unit was Arthur Beale's yacht and sailing shop who vacated the premises in July 2021. In previous operation, the public facing retail was located on the ground and first floor level with ancillary back of house storage/office on basement and level 2 and 3.

There is no previous planning history on the LB Camden website.



Figure 2: View of the Site facing north east up Shaftesbury Avenue



Figure 3: Facing east towards High Holborn from St Giles High Street towards the Site

Consultation

Our client has engaged with the London Borough of Camden ahead of this submission via their pre-application advice service (reference: 2021/6238/PRE). This saw discussions take place between the Case Officer and the Applicant, with input from a Conservation Officer. A formal response was issued by Camden 4th April 2022 and a subsequent site visit was undertaken with the Planning and Conservation Officer.

The scheme within the pre-application meeting included a rear extension to three storeys, which has since been removed from the scheme following discussions.

The Conservation Officer did accept the proposals for a rear dormer extension, stating that this could be acceptable in conservation and design terms, subject to it being of an appropriate design and appearance on the building. Further to this, the formal responses concluded that the provision of a cafe on the ground floor would represent an appropriate use within the secondary retail frontage in the central area. The change of use of the basement and upper floors to serviced apartments (Use Class C1) is discussed fully in the Land Use Planning Statement, provided with this application. In summary, this change of use is supported due to the constraints of the site that would not enable it to provide suitable quality residential dwellings and instead the site can lend itself to serviced apartments use where units can be smaller in scale.

Design Evolution

Following discussion with the Council , the proposals and design evolved further. This saw the three-storey rear extension removed from the proposals at the request of the Conservation Officer. Through the pre-app process, advice was also given on the materials to be use in the remodelling proposed.

Design

Below will provide details of the proposals and design considerations. Full details of the proposals can be found within the detailed drawing pack that is provided with this application.

Proposals

The description of development is as follows:

“Use of ground floor as Class E café, change of use of lower ground and 1st-3rd floors to serviced apartments, inclusion of rear dormer extension for 4th floor serviced apartments, demolition and rebuild of rear lower ground and ground floor, minor external alterations including creation of rear courtyard at lower ground floor level and associated works”.

As is detailed in the drawings provided with this application, the proposed external alterations are modest, comprising of a rear dormer roof extension, demolition and reprovision of lower ground and ground floor extension, as well as minor alterations to the elevations including courtyard, and associated landscaping, to the rear. With regards to the internal alterations, these comprise of internal remodelling to provide suitable serviced apartment accommodation.

Furthermore, some minor changes are proposed to the shopfront. This comprises of alterations that increase the entrance door height and reduces fan lights above the central glass frontage, this makes the proportions more favourable, furthermore, a slight ramped concrete slope is proposed directly in front of the entrance door, with a simple black steel handrail is proposed.

Full details of the proposals can be found within the detailed drawings provided with this application, prepared by Mouskos Architects.

Amount

The proposals include the change of use of the lower ground and upper floors from Class E to Class C1 to provide 8 serviced apartments. The ground floor will remain in Class E and provide a café facility. Please see below for full details of the proposals:

Summary of Proposals	Existing GEA (sqm)	Proposed GEA (sqm)	Existing GIA (sqm)	Proposed GIA (sqm)
Lower Ground	75	75	59	59
Ground Floor	51	51	43	43
First Floor	46	46	37	37
Second Floor	46	46	37	37
Third Floor	46	46	37	37
Fourth Floor	-	24	-	20
Total	264	288	213	233

Proposal includes change of use to provide 8 serviced apartment units and ground floor café. These proposals mean that there is a slight uplift in the GIA of the building, with 20 additional square metres in floorspace to be added.

Layout

This application does not propose any change to the building footprint. Fully scaled drawings are provided alongside this application. However, below is a summary of the changes to the layout.

In regard to the internal changes, these are to ensure optimum use of the site to provide serviced apartments. The entrance on Shaftesbury Avenue remains the main entrance to the building, and this provides access to the café, and to the stairwell that provides access to the serviced apartments, both on the upper floors, and the lower ground floor, via the existing staircase that is to be retained.

The internal works to enable serviced apartment use will be in keeping with the raw and minimal nature of the current interiors with a high quality and paired back style expressing a cosy and relaxed feel with use of natural materials including exposed timber floor. The current timbers will be reused where possible. A blank plaster canvas on the walls will allow the display of art from local artists.

Additionally, a courtyard at the rear of the ground floor will be provided. This will be accessed via a door at the rear of the ground floor.

Scale

The external alteration works are very minor in nature, causing no increase in scale. The current rear extension is of poor quality of construction and damp. This requires work done to ensure it becomes a usable space, and allows for the space surrounding the extension to be brought back into meaningful use too. Please see image below of current external space to the rear of the property.



Figure 4 Current external space at the rear of the property

The proposals include the rebuilding of the extension in materials to match existing. This courtyard would provide a useful amenity to the lower ground floor serviced apartment and it is envisioned to include border planting, as per the image below.



Figure 5: Image showing the inspiration for the rear courtyard

The proposed dormer at the rear is not visible from street level and would not project beyond the rear elevation of the building or above the top of the roof level.

In summary, the proposals would preserve the character and appearance of this building and the wider conservation area.

Landscaping

Planting proposed for the courtyard will include the species, Acer Palmatums, amongst others.

Appearance

The proposals will not cause harm to the site or to neighbouring properties.

The rear dormer proposed, as mentioned, is not visible from street level and it has been sensitively design to not cause harm to the conservation area. The materials used for this will be the same as the existing material and this would be in keeping with the surrounding area, and complementary to the Seven Dials (Covent Garden) Conservation Area. The dormer window has been designed in line with the guidance provided by Camden Planning Guidance Home Improvements (January 2021) and allows for the proposed roof space to offer high quality accommodation and detailing while not detracting from the external appearance of the building.

The proposed rear extension also uses the same materials as existing and the rebuild will be an improvement upon the existing extension that is poorly built and suffering from damp. This is also not visible from street level. This reprovion of the rear extension will improve the quality of the extension and bring it back into meaningful use, this will improve the appearance of the building.

Waste

Within each serviced apartment internal recycling facilities will be provided via a fixed unit within the kitchenette. This will allow for the storage of recyclable waste. The combined capacity of internal recyclable

waste facilities within the kitchenettes will be a minimum of 30 litres for units with 1 bedrooms and at least 5 litres of food waste for recycling in line with local authority requirements as published in the Local Plan and Camden Planning Guidance: Design (January 2021).

Waste facilities will also be provided for the café on the ground floor. This will comprise of a fixed unit within the service area to store recyclable and general waste. The combined capacity of internal waste facilities within the services area will be a minimum of 120 litres.

In addition, there will be provision of a refuse holding in the lower ground floor vault. Please see attached drawing JMM_LGRS 101 for details.

Cycle Parking

The site is constrained in terms of the provision of cycle parking. This is due to the absence of grounds on-site and the nature of the building. It is not possible to provide short stay cycle spaces within the site boundaries. However, two long-stay cycle parking spaces are being provided in a vault in the lower ground floor. This exceeds the requirements for the provision of long-stay cycle parking for C1 use, as specified by the London Plan (Policy T5, Table 10.2).

Access

Access to the site is from the main entrance on Shaftesbury Avenue. This provides access to both the serviced apartments and the café. In order to make the ground floor accessible, the proposals comprise marginally raising a sloped area towards the threshold at the main entrance.

Due to the constraints of the site, accessible access to the upper and lower storeys is not practical and cannot be achieved. This is predominantly caused by the constraints imposed by the historical fabric of the building, and the limitations imposed by the status of the surrounding area as a conservation area. This restricts further extending the building to the rear.

Conclusion

In summary, this proposal comprises of very modest design changes, with the main elements of the work being the addition of a rear dormer and the re-build of ground and lower ground extension to match the existing. These changes will allow for the rear extension and surrounding area to be brought back into meaningful use, and the dormer will allow for the attic area to be brought into use. The change of use, as proposed, has been agreed with the LPA during pre-application discussion, and has been agreed as the best use of the space, due to the constrained size of the site, caused by the sites location within the Seven Dials (Covent Garden) Conservation Area.

The physical alterations are not visible from the street, and the scale of the building is not adversely affected. Furthermore, the proposals have been sensitively designed so as to not cause harm to the conservation area. The change of use of the site will bring a vacant site back into meaningful use and, and maintain an active frontage at ground level.

Thank you

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