

29 November 2022

Delivered via Planning Portal (Ref: PP-11670779)

Planning - Development Control
London Borough of Camden
5 Pancras Square
London
N1C 4AG

Ref: STOL3004

Dear Sir/ Madam,

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 (AS AMENDED)

APPLICATION FOR A NON-MATERIAL AMENDMENT TO AMEND PLANNING PERMISSION REF. 2020/3798/P (UNDER SECTION 96A OF THE TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 AS AMENDED) – AMENDMENTS TO TWO ENTRANCES AND ROOFTOP ACCESS

31-37 WHITFIELD STREET, LONDON W1T 2SF

We write to you on behalf of our client, Virgin Management Limited (hereafter: the 'Applicant'), to submit an application (under S96 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990) to London Borough of Camden ('LB Camden') to make a non-material amendment to planning permission ref. 2020/3798/P at 31-37 Whitfield Street, London, W1T 2SF ('the site'). The proposed amendment is outlined in detail below.

THE SITE

The building is comprised of a five-story block fronting onto Whitfield Street and another two-storey lower pavilion block fronting onto Charlotte Street. The boundary of the site occupies the centre of an urban block formed by Whitfield Street, Charlotte Street, Scala Street and Goodge Street.

Given that the site is located within the Central Activities Zone (CAZ), the surrounding area is characterised by a mix of town centre uses (such as residential, offices, commercial, retail, restaurants, bars and cultural venues).

The site is located within the Charlotte Street Conservation Area. Although the building itself is not listed, the site is in proximity to a number of listed and locally listed buildings. This includes the Grade II Listed Pollocks Toy Museum (approx. 50m to the northeast) and the Grade II Listed 2-8 Goodge Street (approx. 80m to the east).

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12 Roger Street
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Figure 1: Site and Surroundings (Source: White Red Architects)

CONSENTED PROPOSALS

LB Camden granted planning permission (ref. 2019/6274/P) for the following development on 06 March 2020 for:

“External alterations to existing office building including reconfiguration of front and rear entrances, additional plant at roof level and creation of terrace areas to the rear at second floor level and to the front at fourth floor level.”

Following the grant of the original permission, an application for minor material amendments (ref: 2020/3798/P) under Section 73 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) was approved on 29 October 2020 for:

“Variation of condition 3 (approved plans) of planning permission reference 2019/6274/P dated 06/03/2020 (for External alterations to existing office building including reconfiguration of front and rear entrances, additional plant at roof level and creation of terrace areas to the rear at second floor level and to the front at fourth floor level), namely involving an increase in height of the approved roof plant enclosure and minor external alterations including changes to the design of approved front entrance.”

PROPOSED NON-MATERIAL AMENDMENTS

Since grant of permission, the Applicant has acquired the site with the intention to use it as its global headquarters and comprehensively refurbish the building in line with the approved proposals set out above. Following a detailed design review, small-scale alterations to the approved proposals (as amended) are necessary to facilitate the Applicant’s long-term occupation of the entire site in 2023, as the proposals were originally designed to primarily facilitate a multi-let offer.

The proposed amendments are as follows:

Charlotte Street Entrance Gate

The non-material amendments seek to amend the design and materiality of the approved design of the Charlotte Street entrance gate by providing a contemporary metal mesh entrance with internal signage. The use of brushed metal mesh doors will allow visual connection from Charlotte Street into the newly landscaped entrance space and therefore broadly align with the consented design approach. The quality of design and materiality are considered to add further visual value to the streetscene and improve the legibility of the entrance to the newly refurbished building, whilst sensitively respecting the architectural character and appearance of the Conservation Area and the surrounding heritage assets. The proposed revision is therefore considered non-material.



Figure 2: Approved and Proposed Charlotte Street Gate (Source: Design and Access Statement, prepared by White Red Architects)

Charlotte Street Entrance

In line with the consented scheme, the non-material amendments seek to retain the short enclosed passageway via a lightweight 'pergola' structure behind the Charlotte Street gate entrance. Within the tunnel and passageway, it is proposed to install slender metal frames with integrated metal mesh panelling and lighting to create a more welcoming and visually interest entrance into the courtyard. Under the proposed amendments, the frequency of the metal frames has been reduced from the consented scheme and the proportions and tonal colour choices have been amended to better reflect the identity, branding and ambitions of Virgin Group as the single occupier of the building.

One of the previously consented storage units in front of the main reception entrance will be omitted to allow better visibility into and from the reception area, therefore strengthening the visual connection between the entrance, courtyard and main building.

Overall, the use and appearance of the new Charlotte Street entrance would be improved through high quality contextual design, which would also complement the established character of the wider Conservation Area as a townscape of architectural diversity and interest. The revisions are therefore considered non-material.

Whitefield Street Entrance

The proposed amendments seek to remove the approved terracotta entrance and signage panel and reinstate with the existing tiles that currently sit behind the panel. A new metal framed glazed door will be provided to create a visual connection from Whitfield Street to the interior lobby. The proposed design and materiality are considered to respect the architectural character of the host building and improve the Whitefield Street frontage, whilst preserving and enhancing the character of the Conservation Area.

Following the principles set out in the consented design proposals, the existing concrete upstands below the ground floor windows will also be upgraded. The amendments are therefore considered non-material.

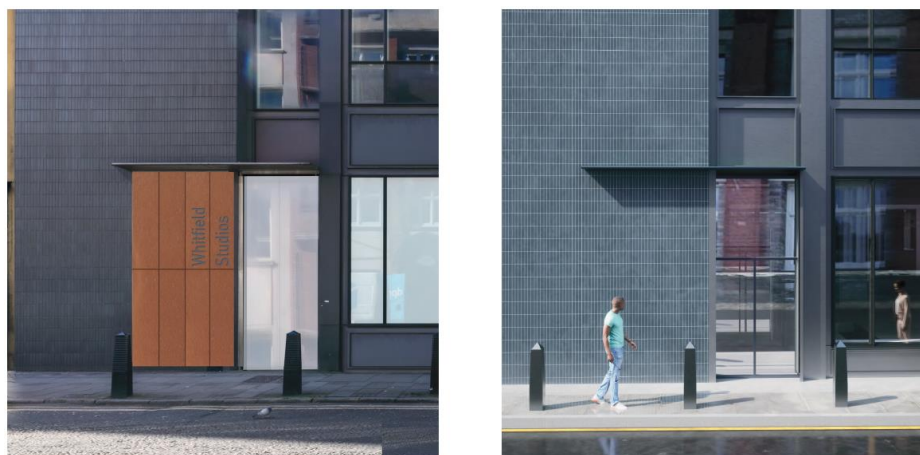


Figure 3: Approved and Proposed Whitefield Street Entrance (Source: Design and Access Statement, prepared by White Red Architects)

Roof Plant Access

The proposed amendments seek to remove the approved extension of the existing ground to 4th floor staircase, whilst the existing access ladder from 4th floor to roof level will be retained to allow for roof level access. The approved plant enclosure, external clad new duct work, and planned lift overrun extension will all remain as per the consented scheme.

SUMMARY

Overall, the application seeks to make small scale amendments to the approved proposals (as amended) to facilitate Virgin's occupation of the building in 2023 as its new global headquarters (a significant investment in the Borough). These amendments principally comprise alterations to the two entrances (from Charlotte Street and Whitfield Street) in terms of the detailing and design of the entrance doors, alongside the removal of a now redundant stair access to roof level and a revised pergola structure within the internal courtyard.

Given the limited nature of the proposed amendments, when considering their scale against the wider approved proposals, the proposed changes are considered 'non-material' and therefore can be determined via a S96a application to the extant planning permission (ref. 2020/3798/P).

With regards to heritage assets, Turley Heritage have assessed the heritage impacts of the proposed amendments. It is considered that the proposed works are modest in their nature and extent, and accordingly would have relatively negligible effect on the character of the surrounding townscape and Conservation Area. The internalised condition of a large part of the site within the large urban block also limits the effects of the proposed amendments on public views from the surrounding streets. Subsequently, the proposed non-material amendments are in compliance with Paragraphs 194-195 of the NPPF, London Plan Policy HC1 and Local Plan Policy D2.

The proposed amendments have also been discussed with a LB Camden Planning Officer and has secured in principle support for the non-material amendment route.

SUBMISSION DOCUMENTS

The S96a planning submission is made via Planning Portal (Ref: PP-11670779) and is accompanied by the following documents:

- Application Form and Ownership Certificates;
- Completed CIL Form;
- Site Location Plan, prepared by White Red Architects;
- Site/ Block Plan, prepared by White Red Architects;
- Existing and Proposed Plans, Elevation and Sections, prepared by White Red Architects;
- Drawing Register, prepared by White Red Architects; and
- Design and Access Statement, prepared by White Red Architects.

Please note that the approved drawings which were submitted under the extant planning permission ref. 2020/3798/P have been submitted for information only as a part of this application and is listed out in the **Appendix 1**.

The requisite fee of £266.20 has been paid via Planning Portal.

We trust that the information provided sufficient to enable the council is to validate and permit this application for the approval of non-material amendments and look forward to receiving confirmation of this at the earliest opportunity. In the meantime, please contact my please contact my colleague Sam Brown (samuel.brown@turley.co.uk) or myself at these offices if you have any queries.

Yours sincerely



Kinari Tsuchida
Assistant Planner

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Appendix 1: Approved Drawings submitted under ref. 2020/3798/P

- A 1496 PA 2000 A- Approved Ground Floor Plan
- A 1496 PA 2001 A- Approved First Floor Plan
- A 1496 PA 2002 A- Approved Second Floor Plan
- A 1496 PA 2003 A- Approved Third Floor Plan
- A 1496 PA 2004 A- Approved Fourth Floor Plan
- A 1496 PA 2005 A- Approved Fifth Floor Plan
- A 1496 PA 2010 A- Approved Charlotte Street Entrance Plan
- A 1496 PA 2099 A- Approved Basement Plan
- A 1496 PA 2100 A- Approved Whitfield Street Elevation
- A 1496 PA 2101 A- Approved Charlotte Street Elevation
- A 1496 PA 2102 A- Approved Courtyard Elevation
- A 1496 PA 2200 A- Approved Long Section