



Historic England

Ms Elaine Quigley
London Borough of Camden
Development Management
Town Hall
Judd Street
London
WC1H 9JE

Direct Dial: 020 7973 3763

Our ref: L01554372

25 January 2023

Dear Ms Quigley

Arrangements for Handling Heritage Applications Direction 2021

VERNON HOUSE 23 SICILIAN AVENUE LONDON WC1A 2QS
Application No. 2022/3985/L

Thank you for your letter of 5 January 2023 regarding the above application for listed building consent. On the basis of the information available to date, we offer the following advice to assist your authority in determining the application.

Historic England Advice

The Grade II listed Sicilian House is a striking and monumental Edwardian shopping parade located in Bloomsbury. It is well known for its elaborate white terracotta red brick exterior which features shopfronts separated by large Corinthian columns with bay windowed offices above. The interior has, however, has been extensively altered as set out in the submission.

The proposals seek to reconfigure the building for continued office and retain use, involving significant changes to the interior. Most of these changes appear relatively uncontentious due to the altered interior. However, we note that two historic staircases within the retail areas of Sicilian Avenue and a further historic staircase at 21 Southampton Row are proposed to be demolished or extensively altered. This element of the scheme would result in the loss of rare surviving historic features of the interior, and therefore cause harm to the architectural interest of the listed building.

In determining this application, it will be for your Council to consider whether this harm has been clearly and convincingly justified and outweighed by public benefits in accordance with NPPF Paragraphs 200 and 202 respectively. We would urge you to also take account of the comments provided by your Council's Conservation Officer (who we note has had extensive involvement and provided detailed advice to you on these and other matters).



4TH FLOOR, CANNON BRIDGE HOUSE, 25 DOWGATE HILL, LONDON EC4R 2YA

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Recommendation

Historic England has concerns regarding the application on heritage grounds.

In determining this application you should bear in mind the statutory duty of section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to have special regard to the desirability of preserving listed buildings or their setting or **any features** (my emphasis) of special architectural or historic interest which they possess.

Your Authority should take these representations in account and determine the application in accordance with national and local planning policy and in consultation with your specialist conservation advice. We have drafted the necessary letter of authorisation for your Authority to determine the application as you see fit and have referred this to the National Planning Casework Unit (NPCU) (copy attached). You will be able to issue a formal decision once the NPCU have returned the letter of authorisation to you, unless the Secretary of State directs the application to be referred to them.

This response relates to designated heritage assets only. If the proposals meet the Greater London Archaeological Advisory Service's published consultation criteria we recommend that you seek their view as specialist archaeological adviser to the local planning authority.

The full GLAAS consultation criteria are on our webpage at the following link:

<https://www.historicengland.org.uk/services-skills/our-planning-services/greater-london-archaeology-advisory-service/our-advice/>

Yours sincerely

Alasdair Young

Inspector of Historic Buildings and Areas

E-mail: alasdair.young@HistoricEngland.org.uk



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Authorisation to Determine an Application for Listed Building Consent as Seen Fit

**VERNON HOUSE 23 SICILIAN AVENUE LONDON WC1A 2QS
Application No 2022/3985/L**

Applicant:	hgh Consulting (Agent)
Grade of building(s):	II
Proposed works:	External alterations including installation of new condenser plant area to the rear of the building at lower ground floor level, installation of new plant and solar panels on the roofs of all buildings, erection of new stair core extension on the roof, installation of new curved entrance sliding doors with metal canopy and timber panelling at first floor level on Southampton Row, new external doors to office entrances fronting onto Sicilian Avenue, installation of new external metal stair, installation of new enlarged windows at lower ground floor level on the rear elevation of no. 21, amalgamation of 4 retail units to 2 enlarged single units, creation of multifunction space within the ground floor, creation of cycle spaces and changing facilities in basement of no. 21 and associated internal works including removal of masonry walls and new structural openings and removal of timber stairs between basement and ground floor levels and replacement metal stairs, new lifts and doors.
Drawing numbers:	Drawings as approved

Date of application:	15 September 2022
Date of referral by Council:	5 January 2023



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Date received by Historic England: 5 January 2023
Date referred to DLUHC: 25 January 2023

You are hereby authorised to determine the application for listed building consent referred to above as you think fit.

Yours sincerely

Officials have considered the information given above on behalf of the Secretary of State, and do not intend to require the application concerned be referred.

Signed *Lorraine Gamble*

Date 26/01/2023

Alasdair Young

Inspector of Historic Buildings and Areas

E-mail: alasdair.young@HistoricEngland.org.uk

NB: This authorisation is not valid unless it has been appropriately endorsed by the Secretary of State.



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