



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 10 August 2026 by T Morris BA (Hons) MSc MRTPI

Decision by Zoë Franks, Solicitor

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date 28 October 2026

Appeal Ref: APP/X5210/C/25/3371974

Holborn House, 113 High Holborn, London WC1V 6JQ

- The appeal is made under section 174 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).
 - The appeal is made by Mr O Qashoo (Yoforia Group CIC) against an enforcement notice issued by the Council of the London Borough of Camden.
 - The notice was issued on 17 July 2025.
 - The breach of planning control as alleged in the notice is without planning permission: the installation of cladding and alterations on the front elevation of the building at ground and first floor levels, a timber structure below the second floor windows on the front elevation and metal cladding on the windows reveals at first floor.
 - The requirements of the notice are to: 1. Totally remove the unauthorised cladding that has been installed on the front elevation of the building at ground and first floor levels; 2. Totally remove the timber shelf-like structure that has been installed below the second floor windows; 3. Remove the metal cladding from the window reveals at first floor level; 4. Reinstate the stonework at first floor level on the front elevation of the building on a 'like for like' basis using materials, profiling, detailing and finishes to match the original stonework; and 5. Restore the shop fascia to its previous condition prior to the unauthorised works taking place; 6. Make good any damage caused as a result of the above works.
 - The period for compliance with the requirements is: Three months.
 - The appeal is proceeding on the ground set out in section 174(2)(a) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended). Since an appeal has been brought on ground (a), an application for planning permission is deemed to have been made under section 177(5) of the Act.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed, the enforcement notice is upheld and planning permission is refused on the application deemed to have been made under section 177(5) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended.

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by a representative of the Inspector whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Preliminary Matter

3. On 17 August 2026 the Government published a revised National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). The main parties were given the opportunity to submit comments on whether the revised Framework has relevance to the appeal. I have had regard of their comments in the assessment of the appeal and in my recommendation below.

Ground (a) and the Deemed Planning Application

Main Issue

4. The main issue is whether the development preserves or enhances the character or appearance of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area and whether it preserves the setting of the listed building at Nos. 114-115 High Holborn.

Reasons for the Recommendation

5. The appeal site comprises Holborn House, which is located on High Holborn in the Bloomsbury Conservation Area (CA). It is a six-storey terraced building whose frontage is predominantly formed of a light-coloured smooth stone set in horizontal banding. The building is adjacent to Nos. 114-115 High Holborn, which is a Grade II listed building (LB).
6. The Bloomsbury Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy (2011) (CAAMS) highlights that the CA covers approximately 160 hectares of central London. It originally developed from around 1660 to 1840 and has since evolved with more recent developments including some of national and international architectural merit. The significance of the CA is mostly derived from its formally planned arrangement of streets in a grid pattern which are mainly enclosed by three and four storey developments, together with the contrasting landscaped squares. The CA also features a high proportion of listed buildings which points to the architectural quality and historic interest of the area.
7. With regards to the building materials which are common in the CA, the CAAMS notes that concrete, glass and steel are used in more recent developments, but the predominant materials are red brick in the earlier buildings and London stock brick from around 1800. Stone is also evident and is cut into smooth blocks or used as cladding. Red brick, stone and stucco are also used as contrasting detailing in the articulation of frontages. I noted on my site visit that the reoccurring use of such materials, including the smooth stone at the appeal site contributes positively to the architectural quality and character of the CA and thus adds to its significance.
8. The adjacent LB is also six-storey in height and dates from 1903-1904. It is significant for its modified Jacobean style with double fronted bay windows, Dutch gable with mansard roof, figures of Edward VII and Edward I, as well as the arched entrances on the ground floor. The LB is notable in the street scene for its high-quality and decorative architectural features and thus makes a positive contribution to the historic character and appearance of the townscape. Its frontage is also mostly formed of red brick and stone which corresponds positively with the materials of the surrounding buildings including the appeal property.
9. I accept that there are varying architectural styles and materials in the CA, including some modern buildings near to the appeal site. Nevertheless, the appeal property is part of a group on High Holborn from Nos. 111-116 whose reoccurring use of brick and stone on the front elevations helps to unify the appearance of the group, such that they contribute positively to the character and appearance of the CA. Indeed, this is reinforced at page 142 of the CAAMS which identifies the appeal property as a positive contributor in the CA.
10. Furthermore, even considering its slightly yellow tone, the light-colour and smooth texture of the stone on the host building's front elevation appears as a neutral

material which is sympathetic to the adjacent LB. This helps to give the front of the host building a relatively uncomplicated appearance which allows for the more intricately designed front elevation of the LB to appear more prominent in the street scene. In that regard, and notwithstanding the development subject of the appeal, the host building also contributes positively to the setting of the LB and the way in which it is experienced in the townscape.

11. Although the Jerusalem stone style cladding seeks to replicate the proportions and horizontal banding of the host building, its golden colour and rough surface harmfully contrast with the colour and texture of the stone on the host building. Despite its thinness, the cladding is therefore an incongruous material which erodes the more unified appearance of the group. Moreover, the timber shelf structure and metal window reveals are further distracting features which undermines the architectural quality of the area and the general coherence of this part of the street scene. Consequently, the development is harmful to the character and appearance of the CA and as such, harms its significance.
12. Although I acknowledge that modern materials can be acceptable in conservation areas and that there is a mix of building styles in the area, the cladding, timber shelf structure and metal window reveals combine to complicate the appearance of the front elevation of the appeal property. Consequently, these features are distracting elements within the setting of the LB which draw the eye away from its intricately designed and impressed front elevation in the street scene. For these reasons, the development is also harmful to the setting of the LB and thus harms its significance.
13. Even if the materials are temporary, reversible and can be removed without damage, the harm of the development would still occur whilst the materials are installed on the building. In that regard, there is also little indication before me of when the materials would be removed. Furthermore, although the cladding might weather, this would take time and even then, the colour and the surface of the cladding would still be inappropriate given the site's context. Accordingly, these matters do not justify the development.
14. I have had regard of Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act), which requires that special attention must be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas. I have also had regard of Section 66(1) of the Act which states that special regard shall be had to the desirability of preserving listed buildings or their setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.
15. For the reasons set out above, the development fails to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the CA and it fails to preserve the setting of the LB. This has resulted in harm to the significance of the CA and the LB. Given that the harm is primarily focussed on the appeal site and its surroundings including the setting of the LB, the harm is relatively localised and minor in scale. Nevertheless, I give considerable importance and weight to this harm in accordance with policy HE6(3) of the Framework.
16. In accordance with the requirements of policy HE6(4) of the Framework, where a development harms the significance of designated heritage assets, the effect on the assets and their significance should be weighed against any public benefits resulting from the development.

17. In that regard, I acknowledge the appellant's submissions that Palestine House is a cultural and community hub and the first Palestinian cultural incubator in the country. It has benefits in terms of providing a co-working space, events venue and meeting place, offers numerous events which attracts thousands of visitors, and it serves a historically underrepresented community in London, thus contributing to the cultural diversity of the city. I also recognise that Jerusalem stone cladding is symbolic and integral to the use of the building as Palestine House and provides an indication to the passerby as to what to expect inside the building.
18. However, whilst I recognise that the development was sought to support the activities of Palestine House, I find that the benefits referred to arise from the use of the building and the associated activities, not the operational development which is subject of this appeal. I therefore see little reasons why the same activities and the resulting benefits would cease if the appeal was dismissed. Similarly, there is little to confirm that these particular materials are required in order to ensure the long-term conservation of the building. Consequently, the benefits put forward insofar as they arise from the installation of the cladding and the associated alterations amount to no more than a modest public benefit to which I attach limited weight.
19. The appellant also refers to policy HC4(1) of the Framework, which requires that substantial weight is given to the benefits of new or improved community facilities and of development that supports social interaction in the local community. However, for the reasons I have already set out, there is no substantive evidence to indicate that dismissal of the appeal would stop the community facility from operating. Therefore, this Framework policy does not result in significant weight in favour of the appeal.
20. Consequently, given the limited weight I attribute to the public benefits of the development, this does not outweigh the harm to the significance of the designated heritage assets which is a matter that I give considerable importance and weight in accordance with the requirements of the Framework.
21. For the above reasons, I therefore conclude that the development fails to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the CA, and fails to preserve the setting of the LB. Consequently, it conflicts with policies D1 and D2 of the Camden Local Plan (2017), which amongst other matters, require that developments respect local context, comprise details and materials that are high quality and complement local character, and preserve and where appropriate, enhance heritage assets and their settings.

Other Considerations

22. A planning condition requiring the removal of the materials in the event that the appellant ceases to occupy the building would not mitigate the adverse impacts of the development since the harm would still occur in the meantime. Furthermore, Planning Practice Guidance advises that planning permission runs with the land and that it is rarely appropriate to provide otherwise, and I see little justification to take an alternative approach in this instance.
23. Policy S4 of the Framework states that development proposals within settlements should be approved unless the benefits of doing so would be substantially outweighed by any adverse effects, when assessed against the national decision-making policies in the Framework. However, I have already found that the public benefits in this instance would not outweigh the harm to the significance of

the designated heritage assets. By the same token, the benefits in this case are substantially outweighed by the adverse effects when considered against the decision-making policies of the Framework which include those relating to the conservation of heritage assets, and the considerable importance and weight accorded to the harm to both the setting of the LB and CA.

Conclusion and Recommendation

24. The development is contrary to the development plan overall. There are no material considerations which justify granting planning permission for the development which is contrary to the development plan. Consequently, I recommend that the appeal on ground (a) should fail and the deemed planning application should be refused.

T Morris

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

25. I have considered all the submitted evidence and my representative's report and on that basis the appeal is dismissed as set out in my Decision above.

Zoë Frank

INSPECTOR