

**LISTED BUILDING CONSENT AND PLANNING APPROVAL
FOR HIDDEN HEARING
788-790 FINCHLEY ROAD**

**DESIGN, ACCESS AND HERITAGE STATEMENT
01 MARCH 2021**



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INTRODUCTION

This document is prepared for and on the behalf of Hidden Hearing for planning purposes. The document should be read in conjunction with the planning drawings, illustrations and supporting documentation.

The Applicant

Hidden Hearing is an audiologist and retailer of hearing aid and associated accessories. The company is present throughout the United Kingdom and is recognised as one of the leading private hearing healthcare companies and was founded in 1968 as a family-owned business.

The service each customer receives is bespoke to their needs, and Hidden Hearing's presence in a town creates or expands provision of a vital service to a variety of people to help them overcome challenges with their hearing. A thriving branch in an area is an asset to the local community and provides a much-needed service – every hearing test the company provides is free.

Customer's consult with qualified specialist audiologists on site and then if they choose to use Hidden Hearing buy their hearing aid and any accessories on site. Hidden Hearing will also maintain aids on site, providing maintenance and battery replacements where required.

Hidden Hearing operate in both the healthcare and retail environments, with their important services providing health benefits to a community, yet as a private company they must maintain an important accessible presence in areas with a historically prevalence of retail establishments

Services Available on Site

Subject to approval of the works and finalisation of the agreements the proposed new branch will deliver the following services:

- Free hearing test and consultation with qualified and professional audiologists.
- Sale of hearing aids and associated accessories (batteries, phones and mobile devices).
- Maintenance and cleaning of hearing aids.
- Wax removal.

Application Description

Fit out of the unit as a shop for sale of hearing aids and provision of audiology services and associated staff functions including the below:

Preparatory shell works including raising old split-level floor and installing new, single level floor. Removal of wall and installation of new steel, new service 'letterbox' opening to masonry wall. Fire separation downstands formed where existing services penetrations enter slab above. Infill of staircase and new ply deck below. Breaking out of infill blockwork under existing lintel and constriction of new separating line on brick pier line. Repair and redecoration of existing windows where not overboarded.

Full internal fit out, including lining of walls, formation of new partitioning, and new ceilings (lay in grid and plasterboard), floor finishes. Installation of new fixed furniture and fittings and merchandising, new standard and emergency lighting and full decoration to all areas.

Installation of new services for the above functions including new drainage and water connections, electrical distribution and small power, data and telephony. New fire alarm system. New comfort cooling and ventilation systems including electrical heating, air conditioning and mechanical ventilation and heat recovery systems.

Cleaning of brickwork around shopfront, repair and repainting of windows, including arched window on southern side elevation. Installation of new aluminium shopfront. Installation of new illuminated fascia signage above shopfront and illuminated individual lettering above archways on side elevations.

For a full description of the works refer to the scope of works on the relevant associated drawings.

For any further, technical information required please contact the architects/project managers.

Reason for Proposal

Hidden Hearing wishes to establish a presence in the area for the sale of hearing aids and provision of audiology services and is therefore looking to acquire the unit. Furthermore, Hidden Hearing is in the process of rolling out a rebrand and refurbishment project across its existing estate to improve the services it can offer, modernise its image and update its branding.

Hidden Hearing positions itself as a high quality, premium brand within its field which can offer a great deal of expertise and high-quality advice and products – it wishes for its updated estate to reflect this premium and modern identity, and for new acquisitions to act as flagships of this.

In order to achieve this, the client requires permission to undertake works to the internals of the building to provide welcome and waiting space, product display, acoustically insulated consultation rooms with hearing test areas, accessible WC and adequate staff and storage facilities. The company also requires external, and shopfront works to modernise the shopfront, make it watertight and decrease the weight of the door. They would also seek to improve accessibility by reducing or ideally eliminating the step at the threshold. The glazing would carry key information on the manifestations to reduce the visual clutter of posters and information boards. Finally, Hidden Hearing would require clear, easily visible signage to the building to advertise to customers its presence and direct them to the store.

CONTEXT

Hampstead Garden Suburb

Founded in 1906, the Hampstead Garden Suburb is internationally recognised as one of the finest examples of 20th century town-planning. It is a conservation area protected by both the London Borough of Barnet and the Hampstead Garden Suburb Trust. There is a strong community feel created by the grouping of buildings; this along with the use of high-quality materials, the traditional arts and crafts style and bold architectural features, such as large chimneys and expansive bays, makes the Hampstead Garden Suburb unique and important to preserve.

Temple Fortune

Temple Fortune is principally a shopping district but also features a variety of residential properties. within the western side of the Hampstead Garden Suburb, with some residential houses and flats. It has a long history dating back centuries and features several significant buildings. Including the Art Deco influenced M&S store; blocks of Neo-Georgian flats; 'The Pantiles' residential complex; and Arcade House and Temple Fortune House, which mark the entrance to the Hampstead Garden Suburb from Finchley Road.

Arcade House

Constructed in 1911 in the Arts and Crafts Style, Arcade House, (Finchley Road Nos 788 to 800 (even)) is Grade II listed. The property is two-storey with three-storey gable ends. The ground floor is occupied by retail units with residential flats above.

The Historic England listing description details the property as follows:

Two storey ranges, by Porter and Union with projecting 3 storey gabled ends. These gabled ends are carried over the pavement as a pair of arcades supported on stone piers. The general construction is brick with mock timber-frame above the shops. Above the recessed centre are hipped dormers. The gables are half-hipped and they overhang.

The details of the listing only list external features, so while it is understood the entire property is listed, it would appear the historical and architectural importance is primarily related to the external appearance.



Figure 1: Arcade House



Figure 2: Arcade House

Listed Buildings

The below table details the closest other listed buildings to the subject site:

Address	Listing	Listing ID Number	Description/Comments
Temple Fortune Court	Grade II	1259494	Flats. Barry Parker and Raymond Unwin, perhaps with the assistance of A. J. Penty. 1911-12. Dark brown brick in Flemish and mixed bonds with red brick dressings; faint diapers to oblique corners. Roof of tile. Dressings of artificial stone. Rectangular plan with chamfered corners to wings forming rear courtyard; twelve-window range. Three-window range to left return and two- to right. Three storeys and flat roofed dormers. Blend of English Classicism and the vernacular revival work of Lutyens and E. S. Prior.
Temple Fortune House	Grade II	1359054	Two storey ranges, by Porter and Union with projecting 3 storey gabled ends. These gabled ends are carried over the pavement as a pair of arcades supported on stone piers. The general construction is brick with mock timber-frame above the shops. Above the recessed centre are hipped dormers. The gables are half-hipped and they overhang.
166 Hampstead Way	Grade II	1259621	House, now commercial premises. Early C20. Brick in Flemish bond with red brick and stone dressings. High parapet to hipped roof of tile. Two storeys and three-window range, bilaterally symmetrical about round-arched entrance set in Tuscan prostyle porch with pediment of raking cornices only; decorative fanlight. Storey band. Cornice to parapet. Designed in late CIS manner. Included for its group value, forming a subtle transition from the high brick bulk of Temple Fortune House, Finchley Road (q.v.) to the lower scale of Nos. 162 and 164 Hampstead Way (q.v.).
1 & 2 Farm Walk	Grade II	1259674	Houses. c.1910, to designs by Barry Parker and Raymond Unwin. Painted pebbledash. Roofs of tile. Two storeys. Angled plan forming transition from Temple Fortune Lane to Farm Walk with crosswing at corner of one-window range; two-window range to No.1; No.2 treated as single-ended hall house, with three-window range 'hall' and one-window range crosswing. Casements of one and two lights with varied placement; canted bay to crosswing of No.2. Stacks to peaks of gable end walls, to right of crosswing in centre of block and to left of No.2's crosswing. Forms a group with Nos. 3-7 Farm Walk consecutive (q.v.) and Nos. 217-221 odd (q.v.) Hampstead Way. Part of the original artisans' quarter designed by Parker and Unwin, from 1907-11.
160, 162 & 164 Hampstead Way	Grade II	1259619	Artisans' cottages. 1907-08. Barry Parker and Raymond Unwin. Painted pebbledash with roofs of tile; exposed rafter ends. Brick and tile dressing, including tile kneelers. Two storeys. Nos. 160 and 162 in single block of two-window range; roughly rectangular in plan with centrally placed half dormer; ground-floor openings off-set from those of first floor, the entrances set within segmental-arched recessed porches; pair of windows flanking party wall. ridge stack. Change in depth of building line and the formation of a small courtyard to the left related to changing building lines of Nos. 154, 156 and 158 Hampstead Way (q.v.).
154, 156 & 158 Hampstead Way	Grade II	1259661	Artisans' Cottages. 1907-08. Barry Parker and Raymond Unwin. Painted pebbledash with roof of tile; brick; tiles to gable kneelers. Two storeys. Four-window range to rectangular block of Nos. 156 and 158; No.154 of one-window range treated as crosswing with facing gable; single-ended hall house type of Vernacular Revival style.
Queen's Court	Grade II	1391092	Housing for working women within Hampstead Garden Suburb, sponsored and still owned by the United Womens Housing Association. 1927 with minor later alterations. Hendry and Schooling, architects. Red brick in stretcher bond with hipped tile roofs and wood framed casements. 2 storey range in a Vernacular Revival style. PLAN: Extended L-plan of 11 contiguous ranges, the rear reached by 3 open loggias. EXTERIOR: To North side of Hampstead Way, a long range of two units flanking a central loggia with an additional half-unit to far right. Each unit comprises a pair of advanced gabled 'crosswings' at each end, these with corbelled flat tile eaves and 3-light casements to both storeys, and a recessed centre with central entrance under tall dormer that cuts through the eaves, flanked by high 3-light casements under short dormers.

THE SITE

The application site is the ground floor unit in the right-hand side gable end, which has been vacant for many years, and is in a poor state of repair. The application site is located at 788-790 Finchley Road, Temple Fortune, London, NW11 7TJ.

Internal Condition

Units on the parade have contemporary shopfits. The unit subject to this application does not appear to have been well cared for historically. The basement areas are of a relatively modern fit out with poor quality 1970s/80s cladding and fixtures, surface mounted services and a generally poor state of repair. The ground floor of the unit is broadly a shell.

The floor is a combination of a lower area of bare concrete and a higher area of a sand cement screed, with remnants of a parquet timber floor sandwiched between.

The walls are generally bare brick or block/cinder block with some surface mounted electrical conduit and cast-iron pipes – believed to be from a communal central heating system.

The internal face of the modern shopfront is in a poor state of repair with the reveals and inner bulkhead damage and loose. Internally the side windows are in poor condition. Some beats to the inner face of the window are missing, and cills are loose/broken and paint is generally flaking. Panes seem to be securely fixed in place despite this, however.

Throughout the ceiling, walls and even windows bear the marks of past partitioning which subdivided the unit and has since been ripped out.

The ceiling appears to be original or near original plaster with a coving detail around the perimeter and beams. The plaster and coving however is in an exceptionally poor state. Multiple areas appear damaged either from past water ingress or internal works. Parts are failing and have fallen away, and the cast iron pipework penetrates the ceiling and coving in multiple areas with no finesse or logic. It is suggested there is absolutely no architectural or historical worth to any of the internal elements of the unit since the vast majority have been removed and are now either absent or modern. Those that are retained, such as the ceiling, are in such a state of disrepair and bear the evidence of some rather clumsy past alterations such that they have no value anymore.



Figure 3: Internal Condition



Figure 4: Internal Condition



Figure 5: Internal Condition



Figure 6: Internal Condition



Figure 7: Internal Condition



Figure 8: Internal Condition



Figure 9: Ceiling Condition



Figure 10: Ceiling Condition

External Condition

The front elevation within the arches has a modern style shopfront (although relatively old fashioned in the sense the door is poorly sealed, heavy and has finger traps). The bulkhead above is insubstantial and poorly finished. It is evident the unit has been unoccupied for some time; this is reflected in the state of repair of the existing shopfront which also has a smashed glazed panel.

By contrast the stonework and brickwork of the larger building is in good condition and well maintained, the details and standard of upkeep to the front and side elevations are consistent and cohesive. The rear elevation, being a service area, is less well maintained but has little impact upon the street scape or perception of the building and its wider contribution to the built environment.

Under the overhanging gable which projects above the unit stonework evidences some marks and graffiti and the soffit is somewhat faded, but otherwise appears to be in good condition.



Figure 11: Front (West)



Figure 12: Side (North)



Figure 13: Side (South)



Figure 14: Shopfront

Planning History

There is no accessible Planning History for the subject site, 788-790 Finchley Road. We believe however that the mirror of the unit within Arcade House, 800 Finchley Road – The Litchfields Estate Agent and the equivalent unit in Temple Fortune House, 883-885 Finchley Road – The Barclays Bank provide useful and informative precedents – their planning history is as follows:

APPLICATIONS RELATING TO 883-885 FINCHLEY ROAD – THE BARCLAYS BANK IN TEMPLE FORTUNE HOUSE

Installation of three condenser units to side and rear elevation at first floor level (Amended Description)

Ref. No: F/04627/14 | Validated: Thu 04 Sep 2014 | Status: Approved subject to conditions

1no. internally illuminated projecting sign & 1no. internally illuminated fascia sign to front elevation.

Ref. No: F/04245/14 | Validated: Tue 05 Aug 2014 | Status: Approved subject to conditions

Replace ATM to meet new DDA access requirements.

Ref. No: C03516P/07 | Validated: Tue 23 Oct 2007 | Status: Approved subject to conditions

New internally illuminated signage for ATM replacement.

Ref. No: C03516Q/07 | Validated: Tue 23 Oct 2007 | Status: Approved subject to conditions

Installation of 4no. air conditioning condenser units on the rear elevation and 4no. louvres on the front elevation.

Ref. No: C03516N/05 | Validated: Mon 04 Apr 2005 | Status: Approved subject to conditions

Installation of 4no. air conditioning condenser units on the rear elevation and 4no. louvres on the front elevation.

Ref. No: C03516M/04 | Validated: Mon 13 Sep 2004 | Status: Refused

Internally illuminated fascia sign and projecting box sign.

Ref. No: C03516L/00 | Validated: Tue 12 Sep 2000 | Status: Approved subject to conditions

Retention of new shopfront with awnings.

Ref. No: C03516J | Validated: Mon 03 Feb 1992 | Status: Approved

Alterations to shopfront

Ref. No: C03516H | Validated: Fri 07 Oct 1988 | Status: Approved subject to conditions

APPLICATIONS RELATING TO 800 FINCHLEY ROAD – THE LITCHFIELDS ESTATE AGENT IN ARCADE HOUSE

Retention of 2 non-illuminated fascia signs above north and south arches (LISTED BUILDING).

Ref. No: F/02360/13 | Validated: Mon 17 Jun 2013 | Status: Approved subject to conditions

Retention of 2 non-illuminated fascia signs above north and south arches.

Ref. No: F/02170/13 | Validated: Mon 17 Jun 2013 | Status: Approved subject to conditions

Installation of 4 internally illuminated hanging signs.

Ref. No: F/02037/09 | Validated: Thu 11 Jun 2009 | Status: Withdrawn

Installation of 4 internally illuminated hanging signs.

Ref. No: F/02033/09 | Validated: Thu 11 Jun 2009 | Status: Withdrawn

New wall hung signs and new 'film' signs to glazing.

Ref. No: C02131BY/07 | Validated: Tue 08 May 2007 | Status: Approved subject to conditions

4no. back lit fascia signs.

Ref. No: C02131BX/07 | Validated: Mon 12 Mar 2007 | Status: Approved subject to conditions

Temporary site hoarding.

Ref. No: C02131BU/06 | Validated: Mon 15 May 2006 | Status: Refused

New air-conditioning units.

Ref. No: C02131BT/06 | Validated: Thu 16 Feb 2006 | Status: Approved subject to conditions

New air-conditioning units.

Ref. No: C02131BS/06 | Validated: Thu 16 Feb 2006 | Status: Approved subject to conditions

Internal refurbishment and alterations and repairing of pavement lights (listed building consent)

Ref. No: C02131BR/05 | Validated: Wed 04 Jan 2006 | Status: Approved subject to conditions

THE PROPOSAL

Internal Works

Design

The unit is to be fitted out to function as a shop for the sale of hearing aids and provision of various audiology services. Rooms include reception, consulting rooms, accessible WC, staff kitchen, and storage.

As previously mentioned in the Application Description, preparatory shell works are necessary to allow for the fit out. These include the removal of some small areas of masonry and installation of steels, levelling of the floor and the infilling of the basement staircase.

For a full scope of works please refer to the relevant associated drawings. For technical information please contact the architects/project managers.

These works, and their associated enabling works to drainage, structure and HVAC requirements are believed to be the most appropriate to the needs of delivering a fully functioning branch. There is little scope for alteration of this scope while still delivering an effective branch economically.

Access

Levelling of internal floor and use of accessible design throughout makes the entire unit accessible. Accessible features include, but are not exclusive to, a fully accessible WC, clear bright lighting, choice of finishes for easier visibility, pile height of the carpet in circulation zones and consulting rooms and clear signage.

Heritage

Critical for the heritage and conservation of the site is its occupation with a high quality, long term tenant who contributes to the vitality, vibrancy and health of the wider community. The extensive internal works are essential to bring the property up to the high standard seen in other retail units within Arcade House and the wider Hampstead Garden Suburb.

External Works

Signage and Brand

Hidden Hearing occupies a wide array of premises across the country, however most of their sites are in conservation areas, and several on listed buildings, so their standard signage has been designed with this as a primary consideration.

The signage's use of individual spaced letters and modestly scaled lettering compared to overall signage zones is all very much in accord with typical traditional British shopfront signage.

Furthermore, use of a limited colour palette, conventional capitalisation of lettering and a symmetrically arranged signage layout are all sympathetic to the requirements of conservation areas, traditional streetscapes or indeed listed buildings.

Unlike many companies with a high street presence Hidden Hearing's standard signage is optimised for conservation areas by design and as such has gained approval, unaltered, in several historic and conservation areas and on listed buildings.

Careful composition of elements and design has allowed more traditional layout and scaling to nevertheless appear contemporary by virtue of material choice and a carefully cultivated aesthetic.

Despite the suitability of the standard signage deployment for historic areas and traditional buildings all proposals are subjected to careful thought and adaptation of the deployment to ensure the proposal is in keeping with the building and surrounding area while meeting Hidden Hearing's requirements – to this end Hidden Hearing has carefully considered and adapted its signage to suit the unique requirements of its proposed new site in Temple Fortune.

It is also of great importance to Hidden Hearing that their branches reflect their new, modernised branding. The company is expending significant resources to comprehensively refurbish and improve the facilities across their entire estate, and this investment it is hoped will be encouraged and supported by Barnet Borough Council and Hampstead Garden Suburb Trust. The signage is a key element in ensuring that the refurbishment has a positive effect externally as well as internally, adequately and effectively delivering signage is important to Hidden Hearing when investing a very significant resources into an area and bringing a period unit back into use. Establishing a well-articulated presence in an area is even more important in the case of Temple Fortune since it is an acquisition site.

Hidden Hearing have been dedicated over many years to building the reputation of their company for customer service, professionalism and quality and as such their branding is of vital importance to their business in allowing their presence to be recognised wherever they operate and conveying to customers a consistent experience and identity upon which they can rely. Recognisable branding colours, motifs and details mean signage is recognisable from greater distances and more easily identifiable by customers.

With their corporate colours and logo both changing markedly with the new brand roll out and refurbishment project the importance of consistency in delivery of the signage is paramount. Hidden Hearing frequently posts literature to customers who request it and has a clear, modern website, consistency in signage between their physical presence and digital/postal operations is reassuring to customers and aids in their identification of their local store.

Shopfront

As previously stated, while the existing shopfront is of a modern style generally, it is dated in terms of its operation, accessibility and style, with significant damage to the glazing and a lack of weather tightness. The bulkhead fascia above is also of dated appearance. The threshold of the unit features a low step which is not ideal from an accessibility perspective and could represent a trip hazard and will inhibit access for wheelchair or walking frame users.

It is therefore intended to install an aluminium shopfront at a slightly lowered floor level, markedly reducing, or ideally eliminating (pavement slope allowing) any step at the threshold. The double door would be replaced by a single door, and a stall riser would accommodate the slope in the pavement – the new door would be more weathertight, lighter and safer - Broadly however the replacement would be 'like for like' in concept and appropriate considering the existing situation, the improvements delivered and the nature of the use.

Aluminium shopfronts are Hidden Hearing's strong preference and standard deployment for a variety of reasons. They are far more durable and easier to maintain to a high quality than timber shopfronts and give superior security and weathertightness throughout their life. Aluminium shopfronts are far more resilient to street cleaning, kicks and damp than timber shopfronts. Powder coated aluminium will not flake or blister due to swelling or degradation of the material below as painted timber does.

The amount of glazing increases the visibility into the branch, with benefits to both the vibrancy of the street scape and perceived openness of the brand. The large amount of glazing also maximises the amount of borrowed light in both directions, giving more sunlight internally in the daytime and allowing more light to escape in dark evenings, which will decrease the darkness under the arches and increase security and sense of safety and occupation – both these points are especially pertinent given the deep overhang of the arches.

The new shopfront would be finished an anthracite grey, which will contrast the adjacent stonework. The fascia above the shopfront will provide a signage zone, and utilise a back panel finished in aluminium the same anthracite grey – with external quality ply and insulation behind. The fascia cladding will be finished into the curvature of the arch, and feature holes formed at the apex to allow airflow to MVHR intake and exhaust grilles behind. These will be subtly integrated with the panel to mitigate the visual impact of these grilles.

Signage Design

The signage utilised by Hidden Hearing in their refurbishment programme is undoubtedly of exceptionally high quality in both appearance and workmanship. The signage is part of the Hidden Hearing positioning themselves as a high-quality leading provider of hearing care.

High quality materials are used, with a mixture of aluminium and acrylic. This combination provides a mix of colour consistent, high quality and durable elements which are delivered with precision. Material choice will ensure signage should not degrade over its life with regular maintenance.

Signage will be installed by a professional and high-quality supplier and maintained thereafter by Hidden Hearing.

Signage motifs and lettering have been carefully designed to be distinct and clear to allow for easy identification by customers, including those who may not have optimal eyesight. The fascia signs within the arches, has a clear blue motif and white bold lettering on a dark grey fascia panel. The side elevation signage is proposed as individual letters on mounting bars fixed to the brickwork. Power supply to these side elevations will be via surface mounted clipped wiring, as other signage has utilised, and surface mounted clipping of cables is common on Arcade and Temple Fortune Houses. The cabling will be black to appear unobtrusive.

Signage is proposed as subtle halo illumination via an internal illuminated diffusion layer behind non illuminated lettering. All lighting is via LED which is reliable and should minimise the risk of failed bulbs detracting from signages appearance in the future. The lighting is not an internally illuminated box, and instead is achieved via embedding LEDs into a translucent diffusion layer behind the unlit acrylic lettering/motif. This diffusion layer will then glow when lit and provide a very high-quality halo light effect around letters and motifs, which are held on spacers, with no noticeable dark/bright spots, instead offering a high quality, consistent effect which lights the signage more subtly than simple internally illumination via a box or indeed traditional halo illumination of merely reflecting bulbs off a backpanel.

Illumination of the sign also aids in the definition of the letters, especially in low light, of vital importance to those with difficulty seeing, and of particular importance given the overhang of the arcade on this site.

Subtle halo illumination via an internal illuminated diffusion layer behind a non-illuminated letter is far more subtle than backlighting a translucent material and we believe should warrant some consideration when conventional internal illumination might otherwise be rejected out of hand – as previously noted this signage is designed with conservation areas and listed buildings in mind.

Halo illumination via an internal illuminated diffusion layer has numerous benefits over external illumination of signage. These include:

- External illumination has the potential, both when illuminated and during the day, to cause shadowing around and over the signage. Shadowing can significantly reduce legibility and readability of signage, especially for those with conditions which effect their eyesight. Halo illuminating lettering increases the contrast between the black letter and its surroundings – this contrast is key to ensuring legibility for those with poor eyesight.
- External illumination via a trough light positioned over or under the signage means the lighting fixtures are visible and evident during the day, even at the height of summer, detracting from the signage and wider building and adding visual clutter. Halo illumination

via an internal illuminated diffusion layer will not add visual clutter and the fact it is illuminated is not evident unless the illumination is switched on.

- Halo illumination via an internal illuminated diffusion layer is a more subtle, expressive, high quality detail which will highlight the investment in the area and quality of the fit out. The illumination is evidently built into the signage and does not appear to be a retrofit or after thought.

It is believed that the above justifies the use of internal illumination of this nature, and illustrates that it is appropriate, and indeed desirable, with numerous benefits. However, it is recognised that any such illumination is treated with some trepidation by those caring for the conservation of historic areas. We would urge careful consideration of the detailed design and thought behind our proposals and the unique qualities and attributes of this style of illumination.

We would however be more than happy to engage further with any concerns raised to reassure, justify or indeed if necessary, discuss possible alterations our proposals to allay any major concerns.

Hidden Hearing's signage is selected with careful consideration of the building they occupy and the areas in which they are sited to provide the maximum visibility and presence for the business but retaining an understanding of and respect for the building and locality.

For this proposal signage is mounted to the brickwork on the side elevations facing down Finchley Road, this mirrors the deployment of signage by Lichfields and Barclays and adds visual balance to the wider blocks. This side elevation signage is used in preference to projecting signage since it better fits the character of the area and design of the overall building and compensates for the relative bulk of the building and recessed nature of the main fascia signage which radically reduces overall visibility.

Within the arches the fascia signage background colour is matched to the new shopfront, this integrates the signage and shopfront within the arch, this cohesion means the elements are perceived as one darker colour within the light-coloured stone arch, therefore accentuating the arches, a predominant and identifiable feature of the unit and the blocks more generally. It is felt this approach integrates the Hidden Hearing brand harmoniously with the building and ties the more modern elements into the historic building most effectively. The transition between the shopfront and the fascia which accommodates the signage has been carefully considered and will be in line with the existing impost of the columns and spring point in the arch in order to be read logically in conjunction with the wider building.

The decision to deploy Hidden Hearing signage on only one of the arches, with the other saying 'Hearing Centre' was taken in order to avoid 'over-signing' the unit, in light of the proposed side elevation signs, and to more clearly differentiate between the arch with the door and that without.

The decision not to deploy the white back panel with black lettering, on a silver fascia – which is Hidden Hearing's standard signage – at this location is that the proportions of the fascia sign and colours would detract from the architectural rhythm of the arches and visually truncate the 'negative' space within the arches. Hidden Hearing is conscious of the need to adapt their standard signage to the most appropriate proposal for buildings they occupy, and careful consideration has already been given to this matter when preparing the application.

Example Photos

Internal



Figure 15: Lounge Area



Figure 16: Reception



Figure 17: Circulation Zone

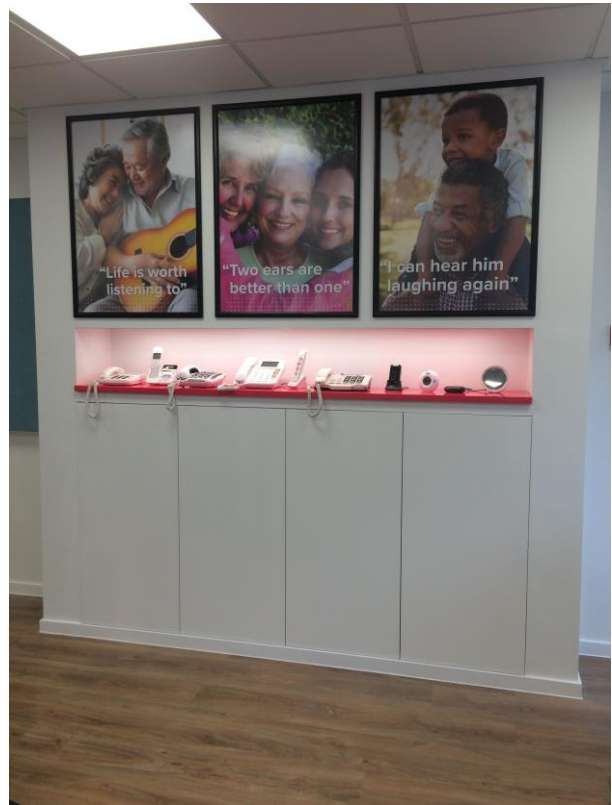


Figure 18: Consulting Room



Figure 19: Consulting Room



Figure 20: Consulting Room



Figure 21: Consulting Room

External



Figure 22: Example Shopfront



Figure 23: Example Shopfront



Figure 24: Example Shopfront



Figure 25: Example Shopfront

ARCHITECTURAL AND SOCIAL IMPACT

The current condition of the site is detrimental to the character of Arcade House and previously mentioned entrance to the Hampstead Garden Suburb. It in no way reflects the character of the wider area of Temple Fortune and the Hampstead Garden Suburb Conservation Area. Therefore, it is vital the unit becomes occupied, and the shop fit is of a high quality. A thriving store and distinct presence on a street is of great importance to the ongoing operations of Hidden Hearing and continued provision of their services.

Due to the current state of the building and the importance of delivering a high-quality and sympathetic design, the proposal would involve a significant investment to allow the unit to be occupied again. The investment would also be coming in a time of extreme uncertainty for the high street.

Indeed occupation of this unit would be of vital importance due to the fact the unit is the first encountered when approaching the suburb from the south, and so represents an 'entrance' and landmark within the wider context.

The site is the only empty unit within Arcade house, it has been vacant and falling into a poor state of repair for many years. It is hugely beneficial to retail streetscapes to have units occupied, with good visibility into units, human interactions and personal service evident and a high level of investment in individual units. Allowing branches to remain competitive in this difficult environment in the face of social and economic headwinds is vital to ensuring ongoing occupation of units with high quality tenants, which will benefit other business in the area.

Hidden Hearing frequently occupy streets which are secondary or tertiary retail locations within a borough and as such help retain a retail presence in such areas considering the difficult prevailing retail conditions. They tend to occupy units for extended periods and invest very significantly in those branches.

The current retail environment in which Hidden Hearing operate is exceptionally challenging and has been for several years, with little sign of it changing. Hidden Hearing add vitality and activity to the areas in which they are sited and support for such businesses' often very modest requirements of the planning systems contributes greatly to the retail offering in a town and services available to residents.

Hidden Hearing's services are naturally catered toward people with hearing needs, who often may be more elderly. These visits to the audiologist provide often otherwise isolated people with valuable social interactions and such visits give customers the opportunity to visit other adjacent and nearby businesses in the same area, contributing further to the local economy. Additionally it provided a key service in an accessible location for local users.

The proposal is of high-quality and reflects the premium brand of Hidden Hearing. While being contemporary, it is subtle in its design and is sympathetic to the character of Arcade House and The Hampstead Garden Suburb Conservation Area. Indeed the arches of the building,. Its attractive appearance and wider setting were part of what motivates Hidden Hearing to seek to occupy the unit, so accentuating and making a positive contribution to those elements has especially motivated the development of the proposal.

CONCLUSION

It is hoped the above descriptions and rationale illustrates the proposals adequately and the proposals can be supported.

All elements of the scheme have been carefully considered in relation to the context. It is hoped the fact Hidden Hearing are conscious of the need to integrate harmoniously and effectively with the wider communities and build environment in which they establish branches is evident. It is also hoped that the LPA and Trust recognise the very significant resources which Hidden Hearing are looking to commit to the development, and further acknowledge that Hidden Hearing as a commercial enterprise operating in a difficult economic climate will need a degree of understanding of their needs regarding signage and internal/shopfront works for the project to progress and the unit to be invested in.

It is hoped that a constructive dialogue can be entered between all parties to seek to deliver an approval for these applications and a positive impact to the area.

CONTACT

The applicant is confident the proposed signage is appropriate for the building and setting and required for their operations and the shopfront and internal works more generally are appropriate to the building itself, the wider setting and the constraints of the listing, however, should the LPA or Trust have any reservations whatsoever then please do contact the agent for this application to discuss if any amendments can be made to answer any concerns and ensure approval.

Should there be a requirement to discuss the above or any further information is required please contact the below person:

JAMIE BELL
BA Hons MArch

Designer

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Please note, due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the constraints this has placed upon the normal operations of businesses our offices will at times be unmanned in working hours. Designers should be contactable via email or their mobile numbers.

APPENDICES

This document should be read alongside the following drawings:

- 308-078-600 Temple Fortune Site Location Plan and Block Plan – Planning
- 308-078-610 Temple Fortune Existing Ground and Basement Floor Plans – Planning
- 308-078-611 Temple Fortune Proposed Ground and Basement Floor Plans – Planning
- 308-078-620 Temple Fortune Existing Front, Rear and Side Elevations – Planning
- 308-078-621 Temple Fortune Proposed Front, Rear and Side Elevations – Planning
- 308-078-630 Temple Fortune Existing Sections – Planning
- 308-078-631 Temple Fortune Proposed Sections – Planning
- 308-078-641 Temple Fortune Proposed Ground Floor RCP - Planning