

Design and Access Statement

1.0 Introduction

This Design & Access Statement presents alterations to the the building and shopfront of 1 Wentworth Street, London Borough of Tower Hamlets on behalf of the Local Authority, The London Borough of Tower Hamlets, and the freeholder.

The application site is part of a wider project, The Middlesex Street Regeneration Programme, which plans to implement a variety of public realm, street market and shopfront improvements in the Middlesex Street / Wentworth Street area by March 2023. This shopfront proposal is part of an improvement works project to 19 shops along Wentworth Street.

The project is supported by High Street Regeneration and High Street Heritage Action Zone (HSHAZ) Project funding. The HSHAZ programme is a nationwide initiative, involving 68 high streets in England, and is designed to secure lasting improvements to our historic high streets for the communities who use them. The programme is funded by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and run by Historic England.

The HSHAZ programme is an opportunity to repair or reinstate historic features, protect historic buildings and the character of the conservation area and in-turn encourage footfall and support the local economy. This project aims to improve the high street in a way that supports local businesses, drives growth, improves experience and ensures future sustainability.

2.0 The Site & Conservation Area

The application site is the building located at 1 Wentworth Street, London which sits within the Wentworth Street Conservation Area, on the north side of Wentworth Street. The building is an unusual corner building, stuccoed, with rusticated pilasters and a pediment on the corner, built in the 19th century. The property is not listed.

The building originally had a brick frontage before a restaurant extension to the 1st floor and over-rendering in Art Deco style. The historic image dated 1895 shows a return shop frontage to Middlesex Street prior to the insertion of shops along the Middlesex Street face, probably c.1915.

The ground floor shop at 1 Wentworth Street is currently occupied by Majestic Textiles, an African textiles retailer, who also occupy the upper levels. The use type is: A1 Retail.

The Wentworth Street Conservation Area was designated in 1989 despite there being no designated heritage assets in this area. It is defined on the west side by Middlesex Street, formerly known as Petticoat Lane and the site of the medieval market dating from the early 1600s, and extends east along Wentworth Street. The area has mainly late 19th century and early 20th century low rise, narrow frontage, fine grain buildings along Wentworth Street, Middlesex Street and the side streets, creating a continuous, harmonious and charming townscape.

The area has many shopfronts in a poor condition, including oversized signage and solid metal security shutters that are prone to graffiti; giving a defensive look to the street and limiting visitor appeal. Wentworth Street Conservation Area has properties on the Heritage at Risk register due to the loss of historic details, lack of maintenance or investment and inappropriate changes made to doors, windows, front elevations and shopfronts. However, some original features on shopfronts such as corbels and pilasters remain, albeit badly eroded, and some have been hidden by modern signage changes or downpipes etc. Despite this, Wentworth Street has retained much of its historic quality and charm; its low rise and low-density character provides it with a local distinctiveness.

The area's character as a mixed use residential and commercial area, and its association with the clothing industry, has endured for hundreds of years. On Wentworth Street and the surrounding streets, the famous Petticoat Lane market still operates market trading every day. The market's presence contributes to the liveliness and activity on the streets and the enduring heritage of the clothing industry in this area. Local businesses are mainly independent family-run businesses running cafes, African fabric and accessory shops, and budget fashion. The African fabric shops attract customers from all over London to buy their batik and Kente cloths etc, particularly at the weekend.

3.0 Planning Policy Context

As the proposed application site lies within Central Activities Zone Frontage (CAZ) designation and the Wentworth Street Conservation Area, the relevant planning policies relating to the property are set out below:

- Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act, 1990. This requires the Council to pay special regard to the preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of a conservation area (Section 72).
- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (Adopted March 2012, revised on 20 July 2021). Paragraph 11 of the NPPF states a presumption that approving developments that accord with the development plan should be done without delay. One of the key principles is to ensure 'the vitality of town centres' and recognise them as the heart of their communities'. The NPPF also seeks to ensure heritage assets are conserved 'in a manner appropriate to their significance' and in determining planning applications, local planning authorities are advised to take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation'. Paragraph 197 also notes that planning authorities are expected to take account of new developments making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness. Further, the NPPF recognises that not all elements of a conservation area will necessarily contribute to its significance and local planning authorities are encouraged to look for development opportunities in conservation areas.
- The Development Plan for Tower Hamlets comprising the London Plan (produced by the Mayor of London), Local Plan, Core Strategy and Neighbourhood Plans.

4.0 Heritage Approach

This project looks to implement a consistent heritage and improvement works approach across the project of 19 shopfronts. Working with Conservation Architects 'The Regeneration Practice' as adviser, we propose to reinstate the traditional hardwood timber shopfront, timber fascia, cornice and high level awning (where appropriate) to each unit. This includes the repair and decluttering of the console brackets and pilasters to each shop frontage, and the introduction of internal open grille roller shutters.

Our proposal aims to celebrate the diversity and individuality of the independent shops that characterise the Petticoat Lane market area, while at the same time restoring the heritage features, order, scale, proportion and materiality of the original building.

Generally most shopfronts are in a poor condition with an aluminium shopfront that needs refurbishing. The signage is oversized in relation to the traditional proportions of the shop, and protrudes too far in relation to the corbels. This is accentuated with protruding external steel roller shutter boxes below the signage boxes.

This application is for the renewal of the external facade; shopfront and upper levels only. The layout of the shop will remain unaltered. Customer and delivery / service access is at ground floor from the front on the corner of Wentworth Street and Middlesex Street and remains unchanged.

5.0 Design Elements

Traditional Timber Shopfronts and Signage Fascias

In collaboration with Conservation Architects 'The Regeneration Practice' we propose to remove the modern shopfront and replace with a new hardwood painted shopfront of traditional proportions and classical detailing, comprising stallrisers, display windows, entrance doors, timber fascia, cornice and high level awnings. The shopfront has been designed appropriately to the host building and we propose a consistent height, depth and setting out of fascias, mullions and stallrisers along the facades.

Shopfront Surrounds

The pilasters and console brackets should frame each shopfront and define the rhythm of the terrace. Unfortunately in this instance, one of the console brackets has been removed and is no longer in existence. Our strategy looks to declutter and clean these heritage features, strip off paint finishes and re-paint, and repair and recast console brackets - making them prominent in order to unify the stretch of shops.

Shopfront Signage

Signage and the diversity of business branding can contribute radically to the vibrancy of the street. It is essential to reflect the individual characteristics of each shop, creating a strong and attractive public image.

The signage will be sensitively applied to the new traditional timber fascia, honouring the proportions of the design. The scheme will employ a mix of hand painted signage to the fascia and vinyl window manifestations applied to the glazing internally. The shop name is centralised with additional information (such as street number and other contact details) set out in a smaller font. The shop signage has been designed by The Luminor Sign Co, a London based studio founded by lettering artist Ged Palmer. The Luminor Sign Co specialise in 100% hand-lettered design, sign painting and gold leaf.

Awnings

The proposal looks to reinstate the original high level awnings (refer to reference images). We have carefully specified high quality traditional Victorian style awnings that will be introduced in a variety of colours to animate and enliven the street - particularly on a market day. The awnings will be manually operated and the businesses have the opportunity to have an additional logo or shop name on the top of the awning.

Roller Shutters

Currently the shopfront has solid external roller shutters that provide a blank canvas for graffiti. These close up the street at night, and can contribute to antisocial behaviour and an unsafe feeling at night. We propose to remove all existing shutters and move them internally behind laminated glass, replacing the shutter with an open grille "jewellers" shutter. This should help to make the street a more attractive and welcoming place at night, with the businesses benefitting from 24hr window advertising - encouraging visitors to return at other times.

Upper Level Works

Upper level works include removal and replacement of existing signage and repair / reinstatement of windows behind the signage, removal of current paint finish, repair of render and re-painting. Roof to be fully repaired, along with the conservation repair/replacement and painting of windows and sills as necessary.

6.0 Sustainability

Stakeholder Engagement

Working closely with the shop owners helps to ensure that the design is fit for purpose and helps promote the business, increasing the longevity and life span of the design proposal. Through encouraging ownership of the design, we aim to guide the owners in the continued protection, maintenance and repair of the unit.

Design

Whenever possible local, sustainable and robust materials will be specified. The use of timber rather than aluminium for the facades is low-carbon and all timber will be sourced from sustainably managed and certified forests.

Construction

We plan to procure a local contractor to limit travel to and from the site.

Use and Maintenance

High quality and well maintained timber shopfronts and fascias can last many years. Furthermore they are easily maintained, re-treated or re-branded to accommodate changes to businesses. We will be working with the LB Tower Hamlets and the shop owners to prepare an Operation and Maintenance Manual to guide the ongoing operation and maintenance of the shopfronts (following the defects liability period). It is important that maintenance is straightforward and repair materials non-specialist and easily accessible so local tradesmen can easily be contacted for the work.

This includes the need to accommodate change - the high street is a dynamic entity with shop uses and branding shifting regularly. We have designed sustainable shopfront can accommodate these shifts by:

- Using painted finishes that are easily changeable / customisable to new brand colours
- Avoiding projecting or box signs that are generally specific to a particular business and more cumbersome to change
- Using simple, local construction techniques that allow for adjustment by local crafts/tradespeople

Access

There is the ambition to maintain or improve disabled access into the shops wherever possible. Changes to shopfront entrances will either maintain existing access thresholds or improve existing ramp access.

Images from top:

- 1-2 Wentworth Street: View showing Edwardian fascia at 1WS which survives intact today beneath modern box signage. Photograph c.1986
- Proposed view of shopfront



Notes			
Revisions			
Rev	Date	Description	Approved
A	19.04.22	PLANNING	EF
Project			
Middlesex Street Regeneration Programme: 1 Wentworth Street			
Client			
London Borough of Tower Hamlets			
Sheet			
Design and Access Statement			
Drawing status			
PLANNING			
Date		19.04.22	
Project Number	Drawing Number	Rev.	
050MSS	18_PR100	A	
Royffe . Flynn			
www.royffeflynn.com			

7.0 Heritage Research and Evidence

The Regeneration Practice (TRP), registered Conservation Architects, were commissioned by Royffe Flynn Architects to undertake an evidence based study of the building and to draw up model elevations based on their research. The photographs shown here are historic evidence provided by The Regeneration Practice, which have informed TRP's model elevations, see page 3.

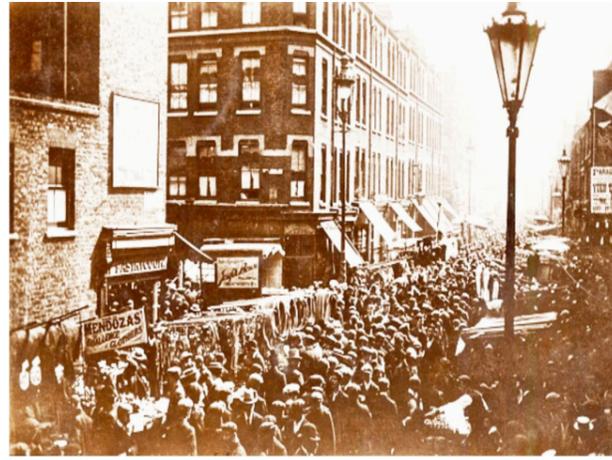
Images:

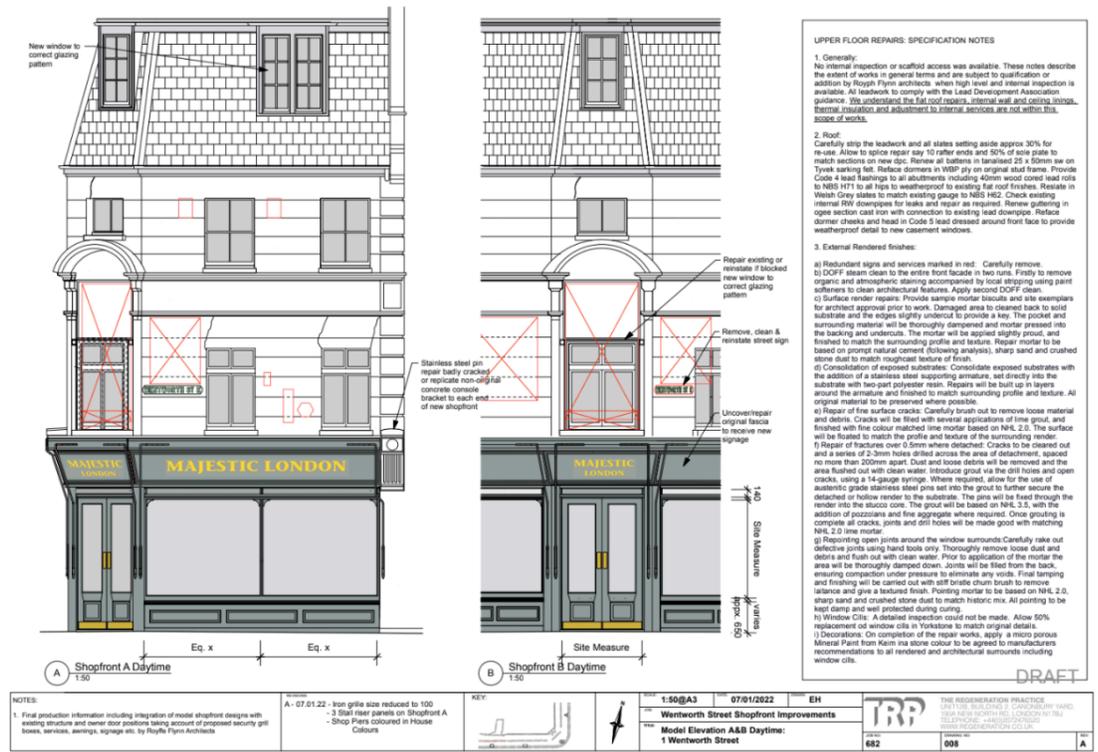
1. 1 Wentworth Street / 72 Middlesex Street: Showing original 19c brick frontage to 1WS, before restaurant extension to 1st floor and over-rendering in Art Deco style. Photograph c.1890s
2. 1 Wentworth Street: Return frontage to Middlesex Street prior to expansion of shop along Middlesex Street. Photograph c.1905
3. 1 Wentworth Street: Original 19c brick frontage before building over-rendered in Art Deco style as J.Lyons 'Corner House' restaurant. Photograph c. 1905
4. 1 Wentworth Street: Building over-rendered in Art Deco style by J.Lyons 'Corner House' c.1912 and here later acquired as a Koshher restaurant. Retains 19c shopfront but with glass facade. Photograph c.1915-20
5. 1 Wentworth Street: 2nd floor corner sash window cut in half to accommodate J Lyons enticing applied Art Deco facade c.1912. Photograph: c.1975
6. Lyon's flagship Coventry Street Corner House, seating 2000 diners, 1930
7. Lyon's Corner House, corner of Oxford Street & Tottenham Court Road, 1909

7.1 Design Development

The final designs were developed by Royffe Flynn Architects in consultation with the leaseholders, freeholders, client (The London Borough of Tower Hamlets) and extended design team to include the QS (Appleyard and Trew) and the Luminor Sign Co. The model elevations by TRP were further interrogated and developed during the detailed design stage taking into account cost, practical site constraints and leaseholder and freeholder requirements. In relation to this consultation and design process, the main deviations from the model elevations are as follows:

- Slightly wider columns are shown to account for unknown structure and the clash of shutter channels/ boxes in the ceiling above. We will assess if these can be further narrowed on site
- Front door height has been reduced due to internal ceiling heights and clashes with the internal door shutter box





9.0 Upper Level Signage

The building has had a long history of upper level advertising. In order to pay homage to the building's history (and that of the market street) the project proposes several hand painted artworks. The artworks do not seek to provide advertising for the businesses within, but to tell a story about the history of the area and this unique building. These artworks have been designed and will be hand painted by the Luminor Sign Co. please refer to the separate signage document for further details.

The proposal seeks to retain, and reimagine the central signage panel sitting underneath the pediment on the corner face of the building. This has long been a historic site of signage applied to corner buildings, and as a key gateway to Wentworth Street, the proposal looks to introduce an artwork which advertises Petticoat Lane market and signifies the entrance to Wentworth Street from the west. The panel will be completed in a style to match the recent replacement Goulston Street panel sign - also delivered by the Luminor Sign Co. These signs work together harmoniously to promote the market street and reflect the important history of the area.

Under the upper level parapet banding to both faces of the building (to Middlesex Street and Wentworth Street), the lettering "PETTICOAT LANE MARKET ESTABLISHED 1650" and "PETTICOAT LANE" will be hand painted directly to the render. This lettering will be subtle and recessive, aiming not to distract from the shopfront signage or the central panel but to sensitively mark the location of Petticoat Lane market and the history of the area. Again, this artwork seeks to highlight the entrance to Wentworth Street from the west.

The proposal also includes one projecting hand painted hanging sign to the Wentworth Street face - providing advertising for Majestic Textiles which occupies the main building. These brackets have been designed in a traditional style to match an existing historic bracket seen on a neighbouring building, 3 Bell Lane. The need for hanging signs at high level is due to the fact that the original placement of the awnings above the shop fascia means that the hanging signs cannot be mounted to the fascia itself. This condition is one that appears to have driven the use of higher level hanging signs historically along Wentworth Street, which is apparent in the historic images of the area. The project proposes a unified datum of upper level hanging signs along the street - set out to align with the existing original art deco hanging sign to Bina Shoes at 29 Wentworth Street.

Images:

1. View along Wentworth Street from west. Photograph c.1915-20
2. 1 Wentworth Street: View of historic signage. Photograph c.1986
3. High level hand painted signage reference
4. Hand painted signage on Dibond with frame, by Luminor Sign Co.
5. Former historic high level signage on Goulston Street
6. High level signage on Goulston Street by the Luminor Sign Co. replacing existing sign
7. Hand painted signage on render, by Luminor Sign Co.



1



2



3



4



6



5



7