

# DESIGN, ACCESS & HERITAGE STATEMENTS

## CLERMONT HOTEL KIOSK, CHARING CROSS

CONCESSION UNIT AT 2 VILLIERS STREET, WC2N

12/01/2024

### 1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This document has been prepared by Panter Hudspith Architects to support the planning application and listed building consent for 2 Villiers Street, WC2N 6NQ. It includes the design and access statement and heritage statement for the redevelopment of the small unit which forms part of the Grade II Listed Charing Cross Station Hotel.

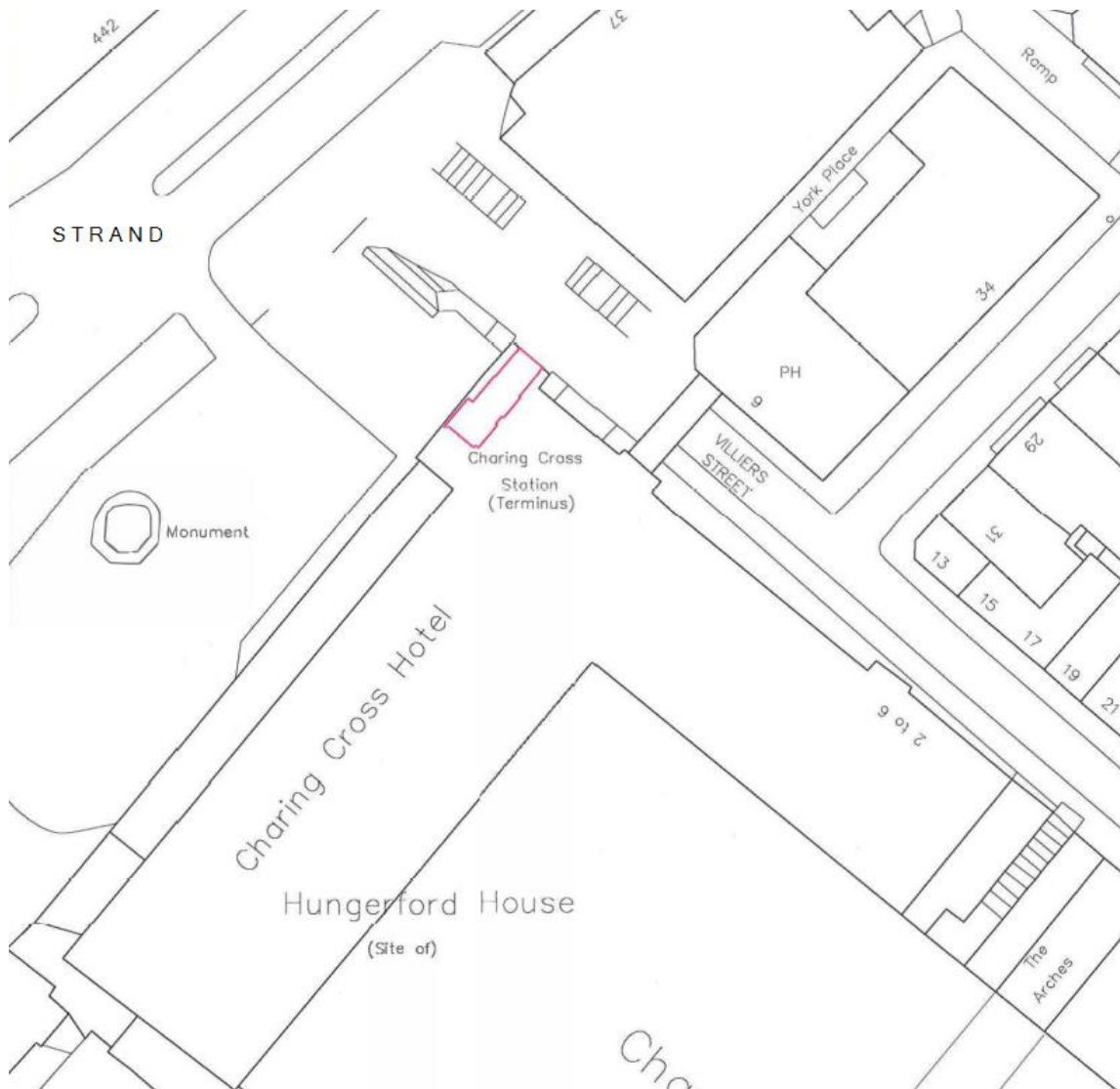


Fig. 1 – Site plan (application site highlighted in red)

## 2 DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

### Site Description

#### Concession Unit

- 2.1 The existing concession unit is situated at the north-east corner of the Charing Cross Hotel building. It has a frontage at 2 Villiers Street, in the northern-most bay on the east elevation (Fig. 2). The ground level outside the unit's frontage is about 2.3m below the ground level on the principle north frontage on The Strand, where the hotel's entrance is located.



Fig. 2 – Villiers Street elevation (application site highlighted in red)

#### Wider Area

- 2.2 The unit is within the Trafalgar Square Conservation Area, and is close to the borders of the Adelphi Conservation Area and the Savoy Conservation area.
- 2.3 The Charing Cross area and Villiers Street receive a very large footfall as a key pedestrian link between Embankment, Trafalgar Square and Strand tourist areas.
- 2.4 The unit is among the first along the street when viewed from the Strand end. Villiers Street is characterised by a vibrant streetscape of richly decorated buildings and numerous shops and places to eat, with both restaurant and takeaway options available.
- 2.5 A number of the businesses along Villiers Street have been grouped together in a collective of retailers and restaurants to initiate improvements to the overall consumer experience of the area. The resulting Villiers St brochure describes the street's offer:

*'Villiers Street is evolving, adapting, and changing to meet the needs of its ever-busier consumer. Situated next to London's famous Gordon's Wine Bar, the collection of 10 retail / F&B units makes up the core of the wider Villiers Street offering and is focused on becoming the grab 'n' go destination.'*

*Located between Embankment Tube and Charing Cross Station, Villiers Street boasts one of the highest footfalls in London with a local work force of over 5,000 employees.'*

## Planning History

### 2 Villiers Street Applications

2.6 Previous planning applications available on the City of Westminster's website are listed below. These relate mainly to shopfronts/advertisements. There is no planning history relating to the use itself.

- **02/07852/LBC** | 10 Oct 2002 PERMITTED  
*Installation of canopy.*
- **02/07853/LBC** | 10 Oct 2002 PERMITTED  
*Removal of unauthorised roller shutter, installation of timber shopfront and display of timber externally illuminated fascia and projecting signage*
- **02/07857/FULL** | 10 Oct 2002 PERMITTED  
*Removal of unauthorised roller shutter and replacement with timber shopfront.*
- **02/07858/ADV** | 10 Oct 2002 PERMITTED  
*Display of externally illuminated timber fascia and projecting signs.*
- **02/01977/FULL** | 21 Mar 2002 REFUSED  
*Removal of roller shutter and replacement with timber shopfront (with internal brick lattice shutter) and canopy.*
- **02/01978/LBC** | 21 Mar 2002 REFUSED  
*Removal and replacement of internal fixtures and fittings, removal of external roller shutter and replacement with timber shopfront (with new roller shutter behind) and canopy and new signage.*
- **02/01979/ADV** | 21 Mar 2002 REFUSED  
*Display of an externally-illuminated fascia sign and externally-illuminated hanging timber projecting sign.*
- **00/08011/FULL** | 16 Oct 2000 REFUSED  
*Refurbishment of existing retail unit including retention of existing unauthorised roller shutter.*
- **00/08012/LBC** | 16 Oct 2000 REFUSED  
*Display of externally illuminated fascia sign, non-illuminated projecting sign, non-illuminated poster sign, and refurbishment of retail unit including retention of unauthorised roller shutter.*
- **00/08013/ADV** | 16 Oct 2000 REFUSED  
*Display of externally illuminated fascia sign, non-illuminated projecting sign and non-illuminated poster sign to north elevation.*
- **96/05865/FULL** | 09 Jul 1996 REFUSED  
*Use of public footpath for the placing of 3 tables and 9 chairs in connection with Mr Spud Ltd.*
- **93/04285/FULL** | 01 Nov 1993 REFUSED  
*Use of public footpath for the placing of tables and chairs.*

### Other Relevant Applications

2.7 Other related planning applications are listed below. These include advertisement, temporary lighting and other cosmetic matters for the hotel's main entrance on the north elevation or the building as a whole.

- **19/07783/LBC** | 08 Oct 2019 PERMITTED  
*Installation of 4 small rawl eyebolts on the Villiers St elevation of the Amba Hotel for hanging festive lighting for the length of Villiers Street. | Charing Cross Hotel Strand London WC2N 5HX*
- **14/04911/ADV** | 23 May 2014 PERMITTED  
*Replacement non-illuminated advertisements comprising 2 no. wall mounted signs to either side of the hotel entrance, fascia sign behind glass facade and three flags on existing poles over the main entrance. | Charing Cross Hotel Strand London WC2N 5HR*

- **08/10345/ADV** | 03 Dec 2008 REFUSED  
*Installation of internally illuminated signage to glazing above entrance canopy and plaque to left of entrance. | Charing Cross Hotel Strand London WC2N 5HR*
- **08/10346/LBC** | 03 Dec 2008 REFUSED  
*Installation of internally illuminated signage to glazing above entrance canopy and plaque to left of entrance. | Charing Cross Hotel Strand London WC2N 5HR*

### History

2.8 Since the mid-1980's the concession has housed numerous occupiers as set out below, including take away food, coffee shop, and various retailers.

- **1985-1998:** Mr Spud – takeaway food, baked potatoes etc (see planning history 96/05865/FULL).
- **2002:** Bridges Newsagents (see 2002 applications in planning history section).
- **2009:** Cuppa Joes Coffee Shop.
- **2010 onwards:** Theatre tickets/box office, evolving to general convenience/phone repair shop/bureau de change.

### Existing Use

2.9 The existing site is in use as Class E retail, with a floorspace of 29sqm (GIA).

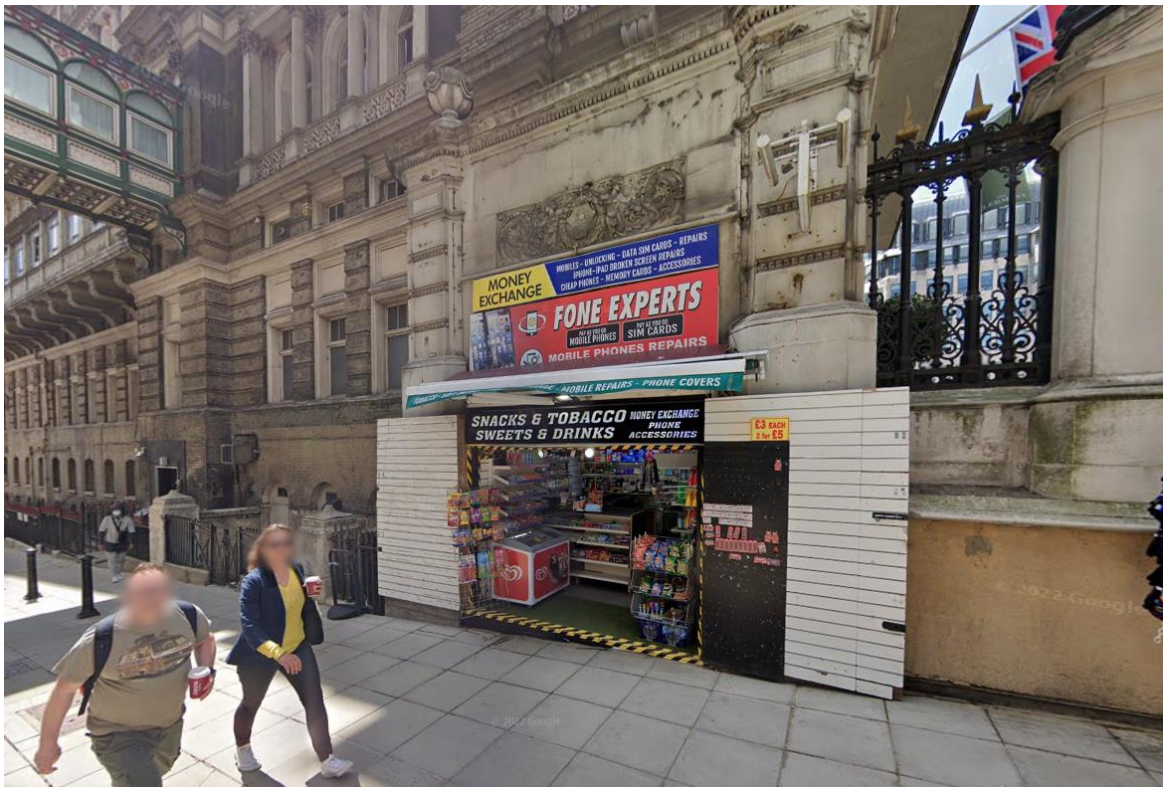


Fig. 3 – View of 2 Villiers Street

## Proposed Use

- 2.10 Alterations to frontage and interior of existing kiosk retail unit to the side of the Grade II Listed Charing Cross Station Hotel.
- 2.11 The proposed development will be within the existing space and no additional floor space will be created.
- 2.12 The proposed occupier of the concession is The Clermont Charing Cross Hotel operating Wafflemeister, a dessert franchise with several branches in Westminster (Fig. 4) and sold within other Clermont Group hotels at Thistle Marble Arch, the Cumberland and The Tower Hotel. The tenant will change from West End Eye (who operate the kiosk newsagents), and revert back to the incumbent hotel tenant of the building - Clermont Hotel Group - that has a long lease of this unit and of the hotel until 2111 from Network Rail. Clermont will operate a franchise of the Wafflemeister brand.



Fig. 4 – Wafflemeister concession beneath The Cumberland Hotel, Marble Arch.

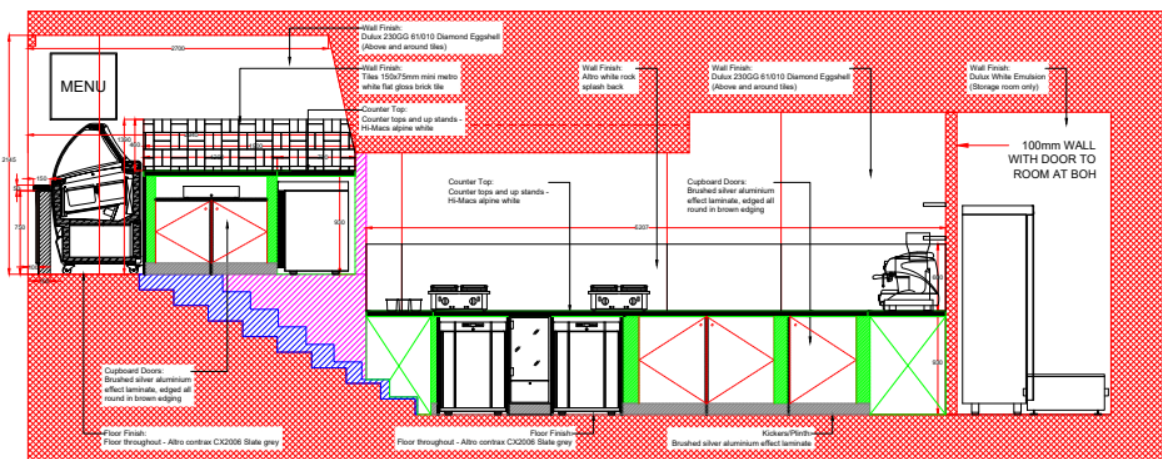


Fig. 5 – Section showing new steps formed above existing stairs

## Design Proposals

### Layout

- 2.13 The proposed layout makes use of the split level floor of the concessions unit space (Fig.5). A food concessions counter is situated at the front at the upper level and a kitchen / prep room and store are situated behind at the lower level.
- 2.14 Customers will not enter the site, but will be served from the kiosk at the frontage, beneath the overhanging canopy.
- 2.15 New steps will be built off the existing steps. A new wall will be constructed to separate the front serving area from the staff-only preparation area behind. This will also serve to display the menus. Both of these elements will be constructed in a way to allow for their removal at a later date.

### New Finishes

- 2.16 The proposals include stripping out of existing floor, wall and ceiling finishes, none of which are original features of the building. The proposed finishes will be contemporary materials, including painted walls, white metro tiles, Altro safety flooring and suspended ceiling grid in line with the operator's brand.

### Awning

- 2.17 The proposed awning will replace the existing awning of the same size and position, and is designed to follow Westminster design guidance. The height above ground level will be at least 2.6m and protrude approximately 1.7m. The awning material will be coloured in deep red and will not feature branding other than the text on the valance, in line with Westminster guidance.

### Signage

- 2.18 The proposals feature two internally illuminated signs, one fascia sign and one projecting sign (Fig. 6).
- 2.19 The new fascia sign will be in the same position as the existing fascia sign. It is a powder-coated aluminium fascia tray with fret cut logo and 10mm opal acrylic push-through lettering faced with pantone vinyl. It is internally illuminated with LED.
- 2.20 The new projecting sign is a powder-coated aluminium circular double-sided sign, with opal acrylic and printed vinyl faces to both sides, and internally illuminated with LED. It is in the same position as the existing sign, using existing fixing points in the stone pilaster. The sign projects 880mm from the building face.
- 2.21 Illuminations along the entire length of Villiers Street form an integral part of its character as a busy thoroughfare with plentiful food and drink offer, all generating activity and footfall to the area. A variety of signage, including externally illuminated, internally illuminated and backlit signs are present. At Christmas time decorative lights add to this illuminated vista, and positively contribute to the vibrant atmosphere (Fig. 7).

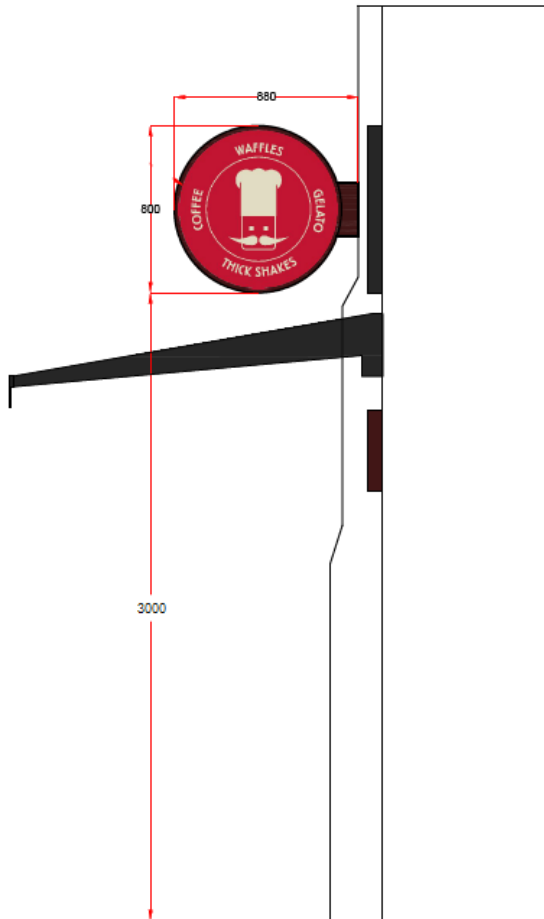


Fig. 6 – Proposed projecting sign and awning



Fig. 7 – Streetscape at night with illuminated advertisements and temporary festoon lighting

External Doors

2.22 The existing shutter doors will be refurbished and repainted in a deep red / maroon colour to match the operator's branding colours (Fig. 9). The refreshed doors will neaten the appearance of this corner of the building and feel less like a boarded up shop when closed.



Fig. 8 – Current shutter doors with unfinished/unpainted sections and dilapidated appearance.

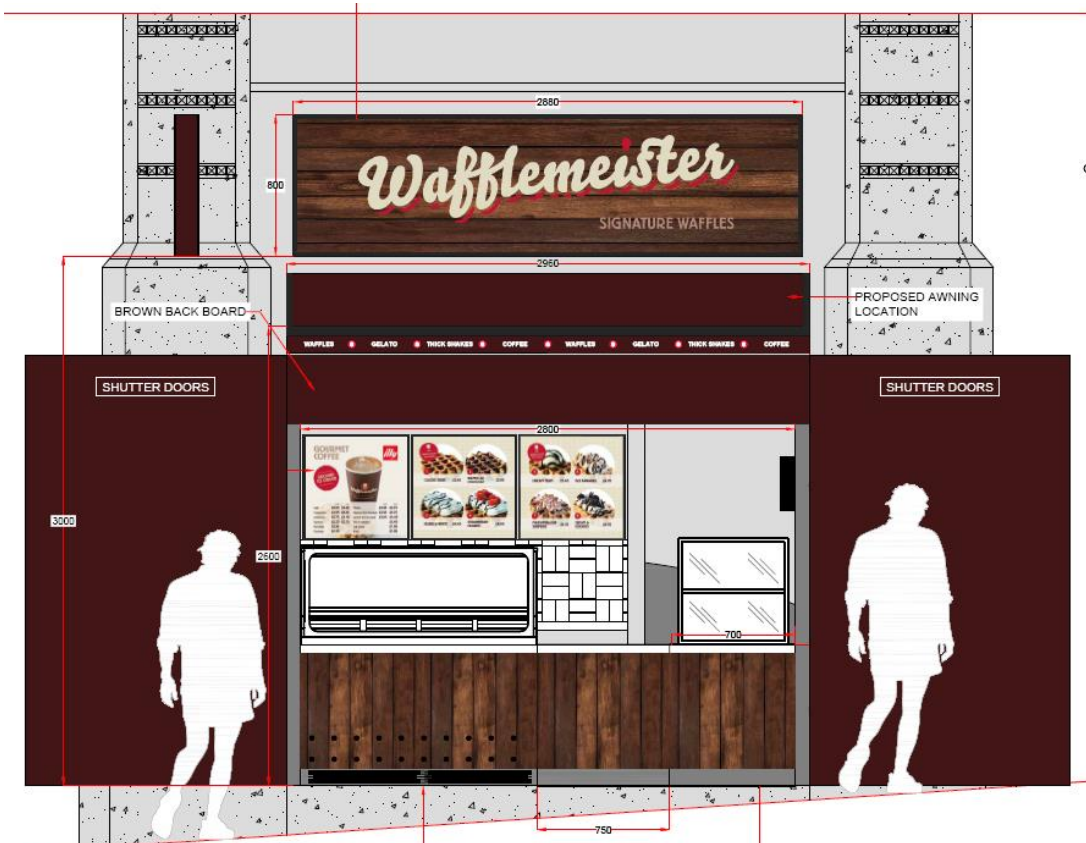


Fig. 9 – Proposed refurbished and painted shutter doors.



## **Access Considerations**

- 2.23 Villiers Street slopes down towards the south of the site, which means there is currently a step up into the concessions unit. The unit is therefore not currently easily wheelchair accessible.
- 2.24 The floor levels will be unaltered; however, the proposed counter will be at the front of the unit on the building line so customers will not need to step up and into the unit, negating any issues with access for the public.
- 2.25 Within the interior proposals, the new raised floor will be created above the existing steps and new steps formed at a steeper angle to maximise upper floor space. While steeper than the existing steps, these will conform to building regulations and will not be used by the general public.
- 2.26 Deliveries and servicing of the unit will remain as existing, which is outside the front of the from Villiers Street. Refuse will be taken as part of the hotel's waste management.

### 3 HERITAGE STATEMENT

#### Listing Description

3.1 The Charing Cross Hotel building was listed on 8th April 1987 [listing entry number: 1236707]

3.2 The listing description summary is as follows:

*'Charing Cross Hotel, former railway terminus hotel to the Charing Cross Railway (an off-shoot of the South Eastern Railway), built 1863-1864 to the designs of EM Barry, constructed by the Lucas brothers. The two upper floors were reconstructed in about 1953 to the designs of FJ Wills and Son following bomb damage in 1941. The hotel was extensively refurbished in the late-C20.'*

3.3 The reasons for listing are given as:

- **Architectural interest:**
  - an ebullient design in the French Renaissance style by a noted architect of the period, richly and consistently detailed, with characterful elevations particularly those facing The Strand and Villiers Street;
  - built with craftsmanship, using good quality materials including extensive use of terracotta and artificial stone;
  - opulent finishes to the interiors of the hotel including the grand stairs and public rooms of the hotel, particularly the former coffee house and lounge, where sculpted details in scagliola and plasterwork are of high quality.
- **Historic interest:**
  - a good example of a London terminus hotel built to accommodate visitors from home and the continent at a time of railway expansion
- **Group value:**
  - with a number of listed buildings nearby, including the Grade II\* listed Eleanor Cross in the hotel forecourt

#### Heritage Context & Setting

3.4 The site lies within the Trafalgar Square Conservation Area, which was first designated in 1969, and extended in 1990 and 1993. The Trafalgar Square Conservation Area Audit sets out the significance of the conservation area. It was adopted in 2004.

3.5 The listing describes the building's context as having a group value 'with a number of listed buildings nearby, including the Grade II\* listed Eleanor Cross in the hotel forecourt'.

3.6 Villiers Street runs through three separate conservation areas; the Trafalgar Square, Adelphi, and Savoy conservation areas.

3.7 The street itself is classed as a 'Secondary Route'. It is a busy pedestrian thoroughfare linking the Embankment to Strand. The east wing of the station hotel runs part way down this route. The elevation is secondary to the principle hotel frontage on the Strand but is richly detailed and makes a strong contribution to the streetscape of Villiers Street.

#### Historic Development

3.8 The building was built in 1863 but has been through several reconstructions, refurbishments and alterations, most notably in late 19th Century, mid-20th Century and towards the end of the 20th Century.

- 3.9 The concession was originally an entrance down to the London Underground Station (Fig.10), which was closed in the mid-20th Century and integrated into the hotel as a retail concession forming part of the hotel lease, with connection to the hotel basement.



Fig. 10 – c1937 photo of the original entrance to the London Underground Station - some original features and decoration seen above the entrance have since been lost.

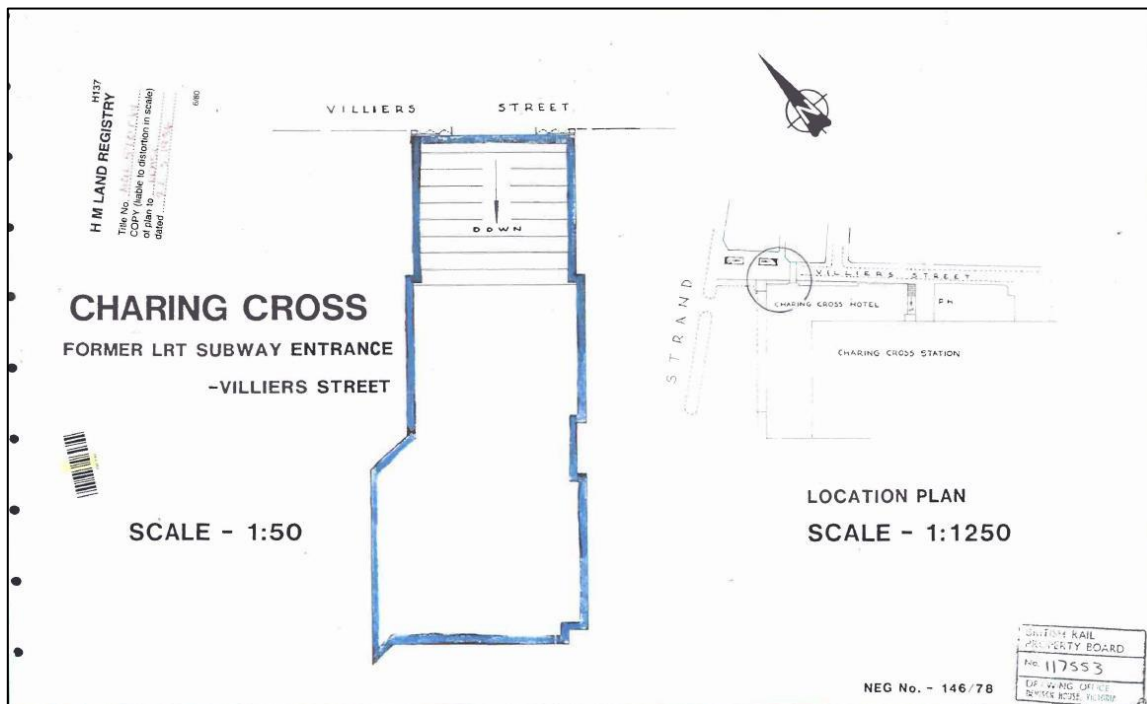


Fig. 11 – Hotel Lease Extract Plan for 2 Villiers Street concession

### 3.10 Historical timeline of Charing Cross Hotel

- **1862:** Work starts on the Charing Cross Station.
- **1863:** Work starts on Charing Cross Hotel.
- **1864:** Charing Cross Station opens for traffic.
- **1865:** Charing Cross Hotel opens.
- **1878:** The Charing Cross Hotel is extended with the Buckingham Wing.
- **1880:** Addition of iron verandas to the exterior of the reception rooms of the principle range.
- **1897:** Extension to south-east corner was added.
- **1905:** 5 December, Sir John Hawkshaw's original station roof collapses.
- **1941:** Bomb damage resulting in loss of spired turrets on the roof of the wing and ridge stacks of the principal range and renaissance-styled pavilion roofs.
- **1953:** Two upper floors reconstructed following bomb damage in 1941.
- **1957:** Ballroom restored and interior refurbishment.
- **1985:** Ground floor spaces remodelled with retail units and mezzanine - structural changes and likely removal of most historic finishes.
- **1991:** Embankment Place opens making use of the air space above the station platforms. The hotel is extensively refurbished.

### 3.11 The listing describes previous development work to the ground floor areas of the hotel:

*'The ground floor spaces beneath the hotel are of lesser interest. They were originally used as waiting rooms, booking offices, luggage stores and toilets for the railway station (illustrated in OS 5 inch: 1 mile, 1894) but have been extensively altered... These ground floor spaces were remodelled in successive campaigns during the C20 notably from 1985 when retail units and a mezzanine were built resulting in structural change and the likely removal of most historic finishes.'*

### **Summary of Significance**

- 3.12 The concession unit space and entrance is a minor part of the building as a whole.
- 3.13 The interior has little architectural value as no original features survive.
- 3.14 The exterior stonework surrounding the entrance has architectural value. It consists of some original features and makes a positive contribution to the building's elevation and streetscape along with being integral to the balanced design of this flank elevation.
- 3.15 The entrance and space itself has some historical value as one of the original entrances to the London Underground Station before it was moved out to the street underpass.

### **Heritage Considerations of Proposals**

- 3.16 This section sets out the main heritage considerations in support of the proposal to redevelop the concession unit as a food takeaway kiosk. It is considered that these alterations will not negatively impact the listed building or its setting in the conservation area.
- 3.17 The alterations result in no loss of original features.
- 3.18 Alterations to historic building fabric are kept to a minimum and are carried out to areas of low heritage significance (per NPPF definition of 'less than substantial' minor harm). Furthermore, the alterations to the exterior and interior are to be carried out in a manner so as to be reversible at a later date if required.

- 3.19 The proposed layout would improve issues with access currently suffered by the existing retail unit, while not affecting any original building fabric.
- 3.20 The refreshed appearance to the concessions unit would be welcome in this area, enhancing the streetscape. The proposed awning and signs are designed in line with Westminster Shopfronts, Blinds and Signs guidance.
- 3.21 The new layout and finishes improves the commercial viability of the unit, bringing the available offer in line with other food establishments on the street.