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Nos.16-18 Thayer Street – Shopfront Signage and Lighting

This assessment of impact on heritage significance has been prepared on behalf of Starclass (Hinde House) Limited in regard to proposals by the architect Robin Walker for new signage and lighting to the shopfronts of Nos.16-18 Thayer Street.

Planning permission was granted 23 March 2006 (PT/05/08028/FULL, TP3988/7073) to provide contemporary remodelling of the shopfronts to 13-14 Hinde Street and 16-18 Thayer Street including installation of shopfront awnings and the infill of the street lightwell areas along Thayer Street to form a broader pavement area. Shopfront details were approved 15 December 2007 (07/07878/ADFULL).

Minor amendments to 17 Thayer Street shopfront (17/00628/NMA & 17/01405/NMA) were approved 07 February 2017 & 01 March 2017 respectively. Planning permission was granted 01 November 2018 (18/07871/FULL) for alterations to the existing shopfronts along Thayer Street including the installation of awnings in connection with no.14 Hinde Street. Shopfront details were approved 13 December 2018 (18/10373/ADFULL). Subsequent minor amendments (19/00029/NMA & 19/01545/NMA) were approved 11 January 2019 & 15 March 2019 respectively.

The site:

No.18 Thayer Street is included in the Portman Estate Conservation Area but not identified as an unlisted buildings of merit.

Nos.16 & 17 Thayer Street are outside the Portman Estate Conservation Area and are not identified as heritage assets.

Historical research illustrates that the buildings originated from the late 1700s as part of the Portman Estate development and were built as dwellings. By the 1930s Nos.16 to 18 Thayer Street were consolidated with Nos.11 to 14 Hinde Street to form a conglomerate building named Hinde House, designed to include flats, shops and showrooms including substantial remodelling of the ground level frontages.

Nos.11-12 Hinde Street were subsequently statutorily listed at grade II in 1973.

The proposals consist of:

A. Uniform projecting signage elements and lighting features to the retail units along the Thayer Street elevation. Either as hanging signboard type or box element forms reflecting the prevalent design to retail units along Thayer Street and throughout the Marylebone High Street area.

B. The signage elements will conform in size no greater than 540mm in height and 540mm in depth; will be positioned aligned with the horizontal features of the shopfront glazing and/or the awning cassettes; the underside of the signage elements will be greater than 2500mm above the pavement level below.

C. Where retail tenants may wish to have a partially illuminated sign, the sign box element will have a low level warm emitting light source within.

D. Petite discrete wall mounted lamps are proposed to be positioned either side of each retail unit shopfront. The lights will be positioned with centre of light 1500mm above shopfront doorway threshold and 190mm from side jamb reveals. The lights will project downwards.

Analysis of the proposals:

E. Guidance provided in 'Outdoor advertisements and signs: a guide for advertisers' (Department for Communities and Local Government, June 2007) states that *"in assessing amenity, the planning authority will always consider the local characteristics of the neighbourhood. For example, if your advertisement will be displayed in a locality where there are important scenic, historic, architectural or cultural features, the planning authority will consider whether it is in scale and in keeping with these features."*

F. It is considered that the proposals would conform to the requirements as set out in the Outdoor advertisement and signs guidance, by respecting the historical context of the buildings themselves and of the wider architectural setting surrounding them.

G. It is found that the proposals would provide a simple and elegant design and would be in-keeping with the retail context and prevalent condition along Thayer Street and wider area of Marylebone High Street.

Assessment of effects on the significance of the Portman Estate Conservation Area:

1. No.18 Thayer Street lies within the easternmost portion of the Portman Estate Conservation Area and Nos. 16-17 Thayer Street form the setting of the conservation area. The proposals would provide an enrichment of detailing to the ground floor frontages; enliven the facades of this portion of Thayer Street and add a stronger street presence to its retail units. This enrichment as

experienced from within the conservation area and from its setting would be in-keeping with its character and appearance. It is considered that the proposals would not harm the significance of the conservation area, but will indeed preserve its character and appearance according to section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Assessment of effects on the significance of the designated and non designated heritage assets:

1. No.18 Thayer Street is within the conservation area. The proposed minor interventions to the facade are not considered to harm the buildings' overall significance. Its overall character would not be significantly affected, but its ground floor retail character would be enhanced by adding interest and detail to a relatively utilitarian frontage dominated by a projecting chimney element, and enliven this portion of the street's facade.
2. As non-designated heritage assets, Nos.16-17 Thayer Street's significance is limited but it is considered that their overall retail nature would similarly be enhanced. Adding understated signage and lighting details to their simple frontages would also arguably enrich the setting of the conservation area and the overall streetscene.
3. The proposals are not considered to harm the significance or setting of other nearby heritage assets, including the grade II listed 11-12 Hinde Street.
4. The proposals by Robin Walker Architects are carefully considered and do no harm to the significance of the conservation area or the setting of nearby designated heritage assets. Together with the planned addition of awnings proposed in a separate application it is considered that this would be an overall enhancement. The proposals would conserve the limited existing elements of heritage value, while improving the appearance of the buildings overall thus *"sustaining and enhancing the significance of the heritage asset and putting it to a viable use and consistent with its conservation"*, as stipulated in the NPPF. The proposals therefore preserve the buildings and any features of special architectural or historic interest which they possesses according to section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.