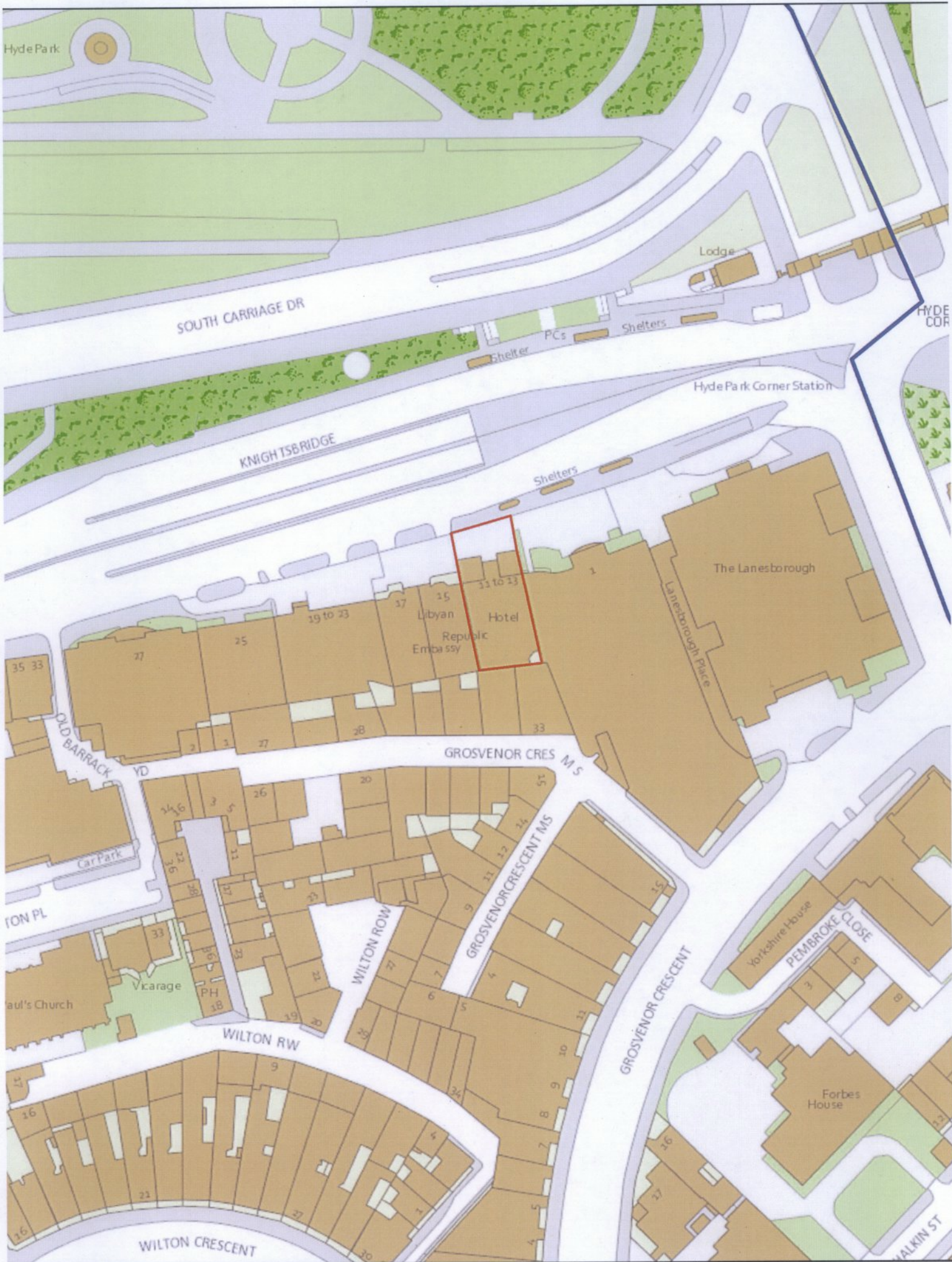


CITY OF WESTMINSTER			
PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE	Date 19 May 2015	Classification For General Release	
Report of Director of Planning		Wards involved Knightsbridge And Belgravia	
Subject of Report	11-13 Knightsbridge, London, SW1X 7LY		
Proposal	Erection of glazed canopies and enclosures to the front elevation at ground floor level.		
Agent	CgMs		
On behalf of	CgMs Consulting		
Registered Number	15/01009/FULL	TP / PP No	TP/16525
Date of Application	06.02.2015	Date amended/ completed	13.02.2015
Category of Application	Minor		
Historic Building Grade	Unlisted		
Conservation Area	Belgravia		
Development Plan Context - London Plan July 2011 - Westminster's City Plan: Strategic Policies 2013 - Unitary Development Plan (UDP) January 2007	Within London Plan Central Activities Zone Within Central Activities Zone		
Stress Area	Outside Stress Area		
Current Licensing Position	Licensed for music and dancing for hotel residents until 03.00		

1. RECOMMENDATION

Refuse permission - design.



City of Westminster

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11-13 KNIGHTSBRIDGE, SW1

2. SUMMARY

No. 11-13 Knightsbridge, The Wellesley Hotel, is located on the south side of Knightsbridge, opposite Hyde Park Corner. The site is an unlisted Building of Merit within the Knightsbridge Conservation Area.

Planning permission is sought for the replacement of unauthorised canopies/structures to the front elevation with glass canopies and enclosures incorporating retractable sun blinds to create two enclosed cigar terraces.

The key issue in the determination of this application is:

- The impact of the proposal on the character and appearance of the Knightsbridge Conservation Area.

The proposed glazed canopies and enclosures are considered unacceptable in design and conservation terms, and are considered to be contrary to the City Council's design policies within Westminster's City Plan and the UDP.

3. CONSULTATIONS

BELGRAVIA RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

Any response to be reported verbally.

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

Objection raised on the grounds that the cigar terraces may not comply with the smoking shelter legislation.

ADJOINING OWNERS/OCCUPIERS AND OTHER REPRESENTATIONS

No. Consulted: 18; Total No. of Replies: 0.

ADVERTISEMENT/SITE NOTICE: Yes.

4. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

4.1 The Application Site

No. 11-13 Knightsbridge, The Wellesley Hotel, is located on the south side of Knightsbridge, opposite Hyde Park Corner. The site is an unlisted Building of Merit within the Knightsbridge Conservation Area. The application site, a former tube station, exhibits a characteristic Leslie Green design, glazed tiled frontage at ground floor level.

4.2 Relevant History

Planning permission 06/00991/FULL was granted for the hotel in 2007 as part of the redevelopment of the site. This permission allowed for two informal external seating areas at the front of the building either side of the entrance portico.

In 2011 planning permission was further granted under application 11/04878/FULL for associated works to the forecourts either side of the entrance portico, including the erection of canopies over the seating areas. As a result of extensive discussions with officers, the canopies approved were simple, lightweight, black retractable fabric awnings and a box system, integral to the front elevation rather than freestanding.

This permission was granted subject to a condition requiring further details of the canopies including product information, a sample of canopy fabric, details of the canopy box including

elevation and sections and details of the edge detail of the canopy when projected. These details were approved under applications 12/04245/ADFULL and 12/04466/ADFULL. It has since transpired that some of the details approved were not in the spirit of the original permission and one drawing approved, whilst showing the projection of the canopy, was not shown in relation to the depth of the portico and therefore the City Council approved canopies larger than originally approved. This has been accepted and the depth of the canopies considered acceptable in principle.

Subsequent to the approvals more solid canopies have been installed, incorporating full structural supports, underside heaters and lights as well as glazed panels between the canopies and the entrance portico. A plastic green hedge within permanent planters constructed of part brickwork and part wood have also been installed to enclose the terraces within which are contained permanent fireplaces and indoor furniture.

The unauthorised enclosure of the front forecourts conflicts with the nature of the initial approvals, which sought to retain a visually open frontage and introduce an informal seating area. The installed features visually obscure the building's distinctive façade, to the detriment of its appearance and townscape contribution resulting in harm to the character and appearance of this part of the Knightsbridge Conservation Area. Enforcement action to secure the removal of these structures has been initiated.

5. THE PROPOSAL

The current proposals have been submitted to regularise the unauthorised works that have taken place but propose an alternative approach to enclosing the forecourts and seek to create formal covered cigar terraces with permanent glazed components enclosing the seating areas.

6. DETAILED CONSIDERATIONS

6.1 Land Use

The lawful use of the property is a hotel and therefore there are no land use implications as a result of this application.

6.2 Townscape and Design

The glass canopies/enclosures, which incorporate retractable sun blinds, would extend directly over the seating areas which would be enclosed on all exposed sides by cantilevered glass screens (approximately 3300mm in height). Bronze mesh fins are incorporated to the side panels to act as privacy screening. In addition to the structures which serve to enclose the seating areas, ramp accesses either side will be edged with glass wind screens (2555mm in height) which will sit upon dwarf walls. A modest gap is provided between the canopies and the vertical glass below, to provide ventilation to the cigar terraces.

It is considered that the glass structures, whilst not fully weather proof, read as two very large projecting conservatories to the front of the building. These additions serve to further formalise the areas to the front of the building, reading as extensions as opposed to informal seating areas for the hotel.

Visually, the extensive glazing proposed would sit in stark contrast with the established townscape character of this part of Knightsbridge. Unlike the unauthorised hedge/screens and heavy canopies, the glass canopies and screens would allow the frontage of the building to be seen, however, as two substantial glass boxes the additions would have a significant visual impact on the townscape, particularly at night when light would be emitted as light boxes. The sun blinds are unlikely to diminish this affect.

The proposals are contrary to a number of design policies. The proposals fail to take into consideration the architectural quality of the building, and local character and distinctiveness of the area, which is contrary to Policy DES1. Policy DES5 is clear in advising that alterations should not visually dominate the host building and should contribute to the architectural integrity or proportions of a building or group of buildings.

The works seek to enclose and formalise the seating areas by installing permanent structures, which act as extensions to the building. Policy DES5 also states that extensions at the front of buildings are very rarely acceptable because of their damaging impact on the appearance of buildings, the streetscape and the area generally.

Due to the harmful visual impact of the proposals on the building and the surrounding conservation area, the proposals are contrary to Policy DES9, which seek to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of conservation areas, and their settings. The proximity of the site to Hyde Park would also mean that proposals would affect the setting of the Royal Parks Conservation Area.

In addition, Hyde Park is a designated Historic Park. DES12 seeks to preserve or enhance the appearance and integrity of such open spaces and their setting. The proposals would have a notable and harmful visual impact upon the setting and view out of the Park.

The proposals are therefore considered contrary to design policies due to the harmful visual impact upon the host building, the character and appearance of the Knightsbridge Conservation Area as well as the setting of the Royal Parks Conservation Area and Hyde Park.

In accordance with Chapter 12 of the NPPF, the harm is considered less than substantial. Where proposals lead to less than substantial harm Para 134 of the NPPF states that this harm should be weighed against substantial public benefits, including securing the building's optimum viable use. The applicant has not identified public benefits arising from the proposal. A case has been presented which argues that the proposal provides a long term solution to providing covered cigar terraces. This is considered a desirable but not essential facility of the hotel, and a case has not been presented to support the importance of the cigar terraces to the viability of a hotel in this location. As such, it is not considered that the cigar terraces are essential in securing the building's optimum viable use.

The proposals are therefore recommended for refusal.

6.3 Amenity

Given the location of the cigar terraces on the front of the property on the busy Knightsbridge and adjacent to other commercial properties, it is not considered that there would be any detrimental impact upon the amenity of neighbouring properties.

6.4 Transportation/Servicing

The proposal raises no concerns with regards to servicing. The site is not public highway so raises no issues with regards to pedestrian flows along Knightsbridge.

6.5 Access

The proposals allow for level access to the service areas of the hotel for staff. The existing main entrance to the hotel already provides level access for visitors to the hotel.

6.6 Other Core Strategy/ UDP/Westminster Policy Considerations

Central Government's National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) came into effect on 27 March 2012. It sets out the Government's planning policies and how they are expected to be applied. The NPPF has replaced almost all of the Government's existing published planning policy statements/guidance as well as the circulars on planning obligations and strategic planning in London. It is a material consideration in determining planning applications.

Until 27 March 2013, the City Council was able to give full weight to relevant policies in the Core Strategy and London Plan, even if there was a limited degree of conflict with the framework. The City Council is now required to give due weight to relevant policies in existing plans "according to their degree of consistency" with the NPPF. Westminster's City Plan: Strategic Policies was adopted by Full Council on 13 November 2013 and is fully compliant with the NPPF. For the UDP, due weight should be given to relevant policies according to their degree of consistency with the NPPF (the closer the policies in the plan to the NPPF, the greater the weight that may be given).

The UDP policies referred to in the consideration of this application are considered to be consistent with the NPPF unless stated otherwise.

6.7 London Plan

The proposal does not raise strategic issues and does not have significant implications for the London Plan.

6.8 Planning Obligations

Not applicable.

6.9 Environmental Assessment including Sustainability and Biodiversity Issues

Not applicable.

6.10 Other issues

Environmental Health officers have objected to the proposals on the grounds that the cigar shelters may not comply with the Smoke Free (Premises and Enforcement) Regulations 2006 although further details will be required at a later date to make this decision. Although this could not form a reason for refusal as it is outside of planning control, an Informative is recommended to advise the applicant of Environmental Health's concerns.

6.11 Conclusion

For the reasons set out above, it is considered that the cigar terraces are unacceptable in design and conservation terms and are recommended for refusal. The proposals are considered to be contrary to Policy S25 and S28 of Westminster's City Plan and DES 1, DES 5, DES 9 and DES 12 of the UDP.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Application form.
2. Memorandum from Environmental Health dated 20 March 2015.

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUERIES ABOUT THIS REPORT OR WISH TO INSPECT ANY OF THE BACKGROUND PAPERS PLEASE CONTACT AMANDA JACKSON ON 020 7641 2934 OR BY E-MAIL – ajackson@westminster.gov.uk

DRAFT DECISION LETTER

Address: 11-13 Knightsbridge, London, SW1X 7LY

Proposal: Erection of glazed canopies and enclosures to the front elevation at ground floor level.

Plan Nos: A-7000; A-7001; A-7002; A-7100; A-7200; A-7201; Site location plan; Heritage Statement dated February 2015; Night time render.

Case Officer: Kimberley Davies

Direct Tel. No. 020 7641 5939

Recommended Reason(s) for Refusal:

Reason:

- 1 Because of their design and appearance, the glass enclosures would harm the appearance of this building and fail to maintain or improve (preserve or enhance) the character and appearance of the Knightsbridge Conservation Area as well as the setting of the Royal Parks Conservation Area and Hyde Park. This would not meet S25 and S28 of Westminster's City Plan: Strategic Policies adopted November 2013 and DES 1, DES 5; DES 9 and paras 10.108 to 10.128 of our Unitary Development Plan that we adopted in January 2007. The proposals also fail to meet the requirements of chapter 12, para 134 of the NPPF.

Informative(s):

- 1 In dealing with this application the City Council has implemented the requirement in the National Planning Policy Framework to work with the applicant in a positive and proactive way so far as practicable. We have made available detailed advice in the form of our statutory policies in Westminster's City Plan: Strategic Policies adopted November 2013, Unitary Development Plan, Supplementary Planning documents, planning briefs and other informal written guidance, as well as offering a full pre-application advice service. However, we have been unable to seek solutions to problems as the principle of the proposal is clearly contrary to our statutory policies and negotiation could not overcome the reasons for refusal.

General Notes

1. Dimensions are in millimetres unless stated otherwise.
2. Levels are in metres AOD unless stated otherwise.
3. Dimensions govern.
4. Do not scale off drawing.
5. All dimensions to be verified on site before proceeding.
6. All discrepancies to be notified in writing to Make Limited.

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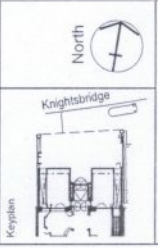
Rev	Date	Reason For Issue	KG	Chk
00	30.01.15	Planning submission		

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11 Berkeley Street
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W1J 8DS



Project
The Wellesley Hotel
Cigar Terraces

Drawing Title
Plan

Scale	Page Size	Date	Rev No.
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Project No.	Dwg No.	A-7000	
1087			

Extent of existing terrace boundary

Ramped staff access

Extent of glass canopy overhead

Removable metal mesh privacy screens

Cantilevered glass screen

Indicative furniture layout

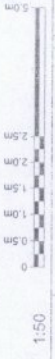
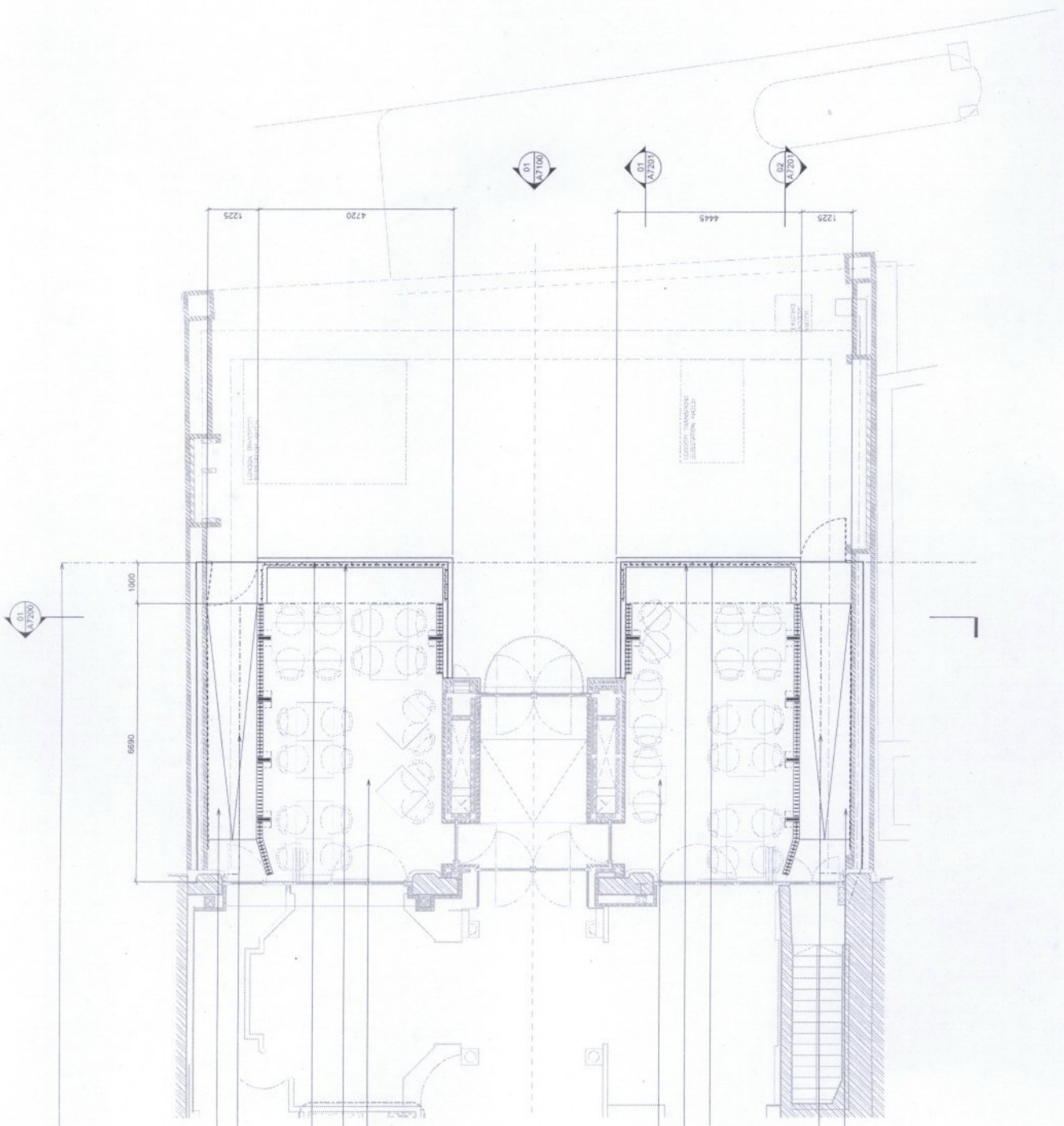
Indicative furniture layout

Cantilevered glass screen

Removable metal mesh privacy screens

Extent of glass canopy overhead

Ramped LUL access



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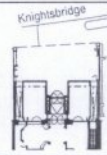
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W1J 8DS

Keyplan



Project
The Wellesley Hotel
Cigar Terraces

Drawing Title
Roof plan

Scale	Page Size	Date
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Extent of existing terrace boundary

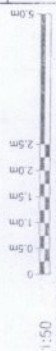
Glass wind screen
Glass canopy
Dark bronze metal infill panel
Canalised glass screen
Motorised retractable blind
for solar shading

Glass beams

Glass beams
Motorised retractable blind
for solar shading
Canalised glass screen
Dark bronze metal infill panel

Glass canopy
Glass wind screen

Extent of existing terrace boundary



General Notes
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 2. Levels are in metres AOD unless stated otherwise.
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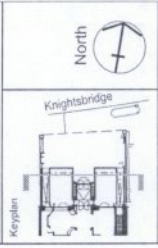
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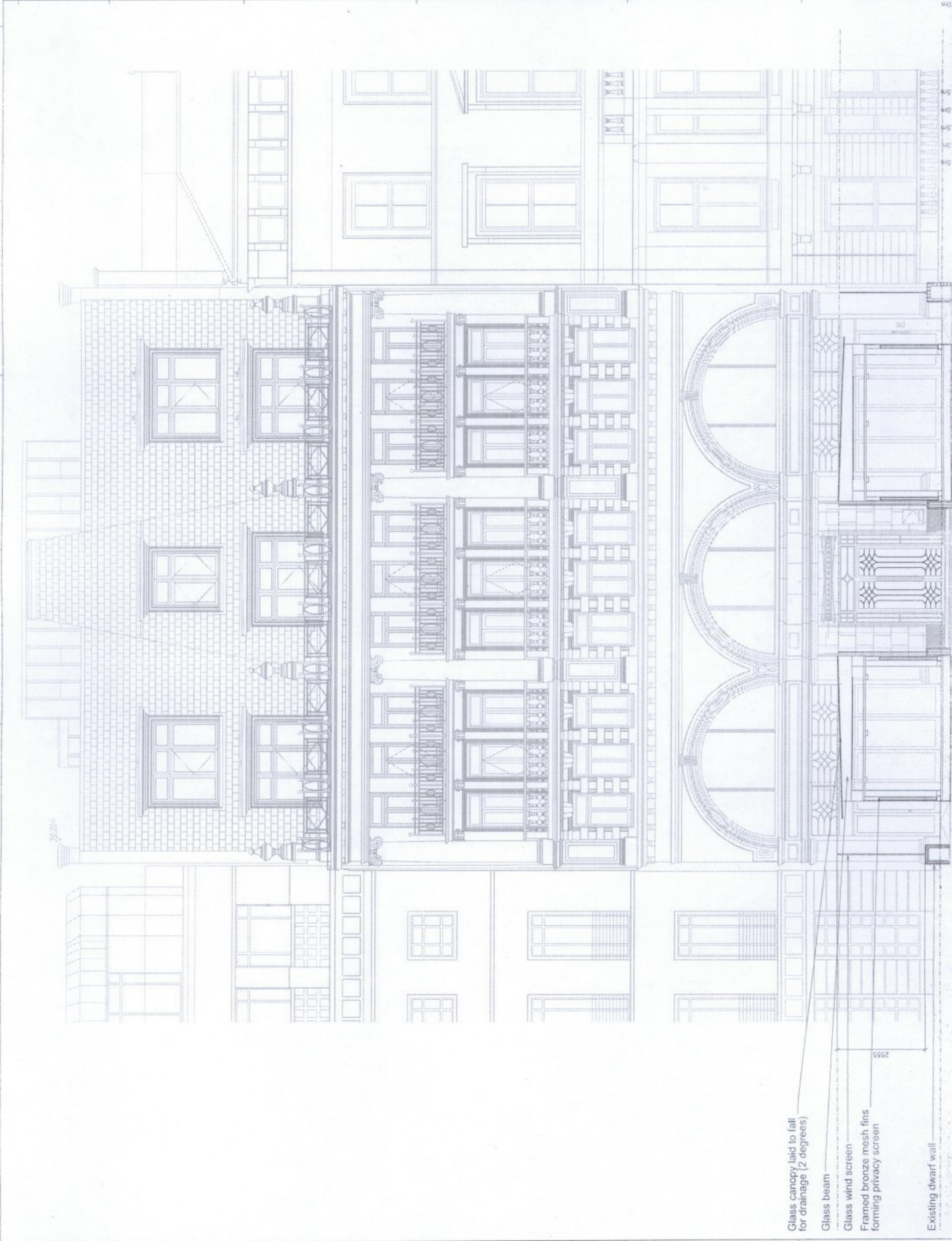
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Project
The Wellesley Hotel
 Cigar Terraces

Drawing Title
 East - west section

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Project No.	Draw No.	Rev No.
1087	A-7200	00



Glass canopy laid to fall for drainage (2 degrees)
 Glass beam
 Glass wind screen
 Framed bronze mesh fins forming privacy screen

Existing dwarf wall

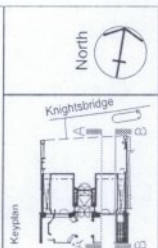
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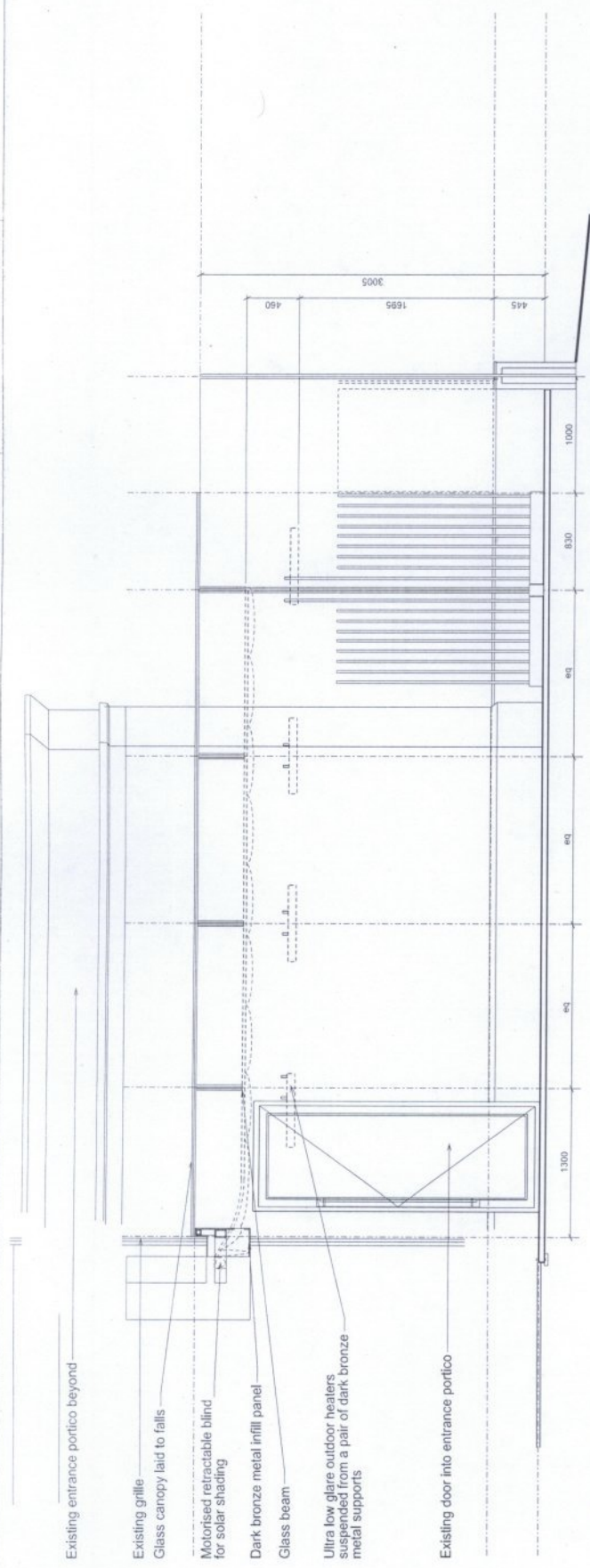
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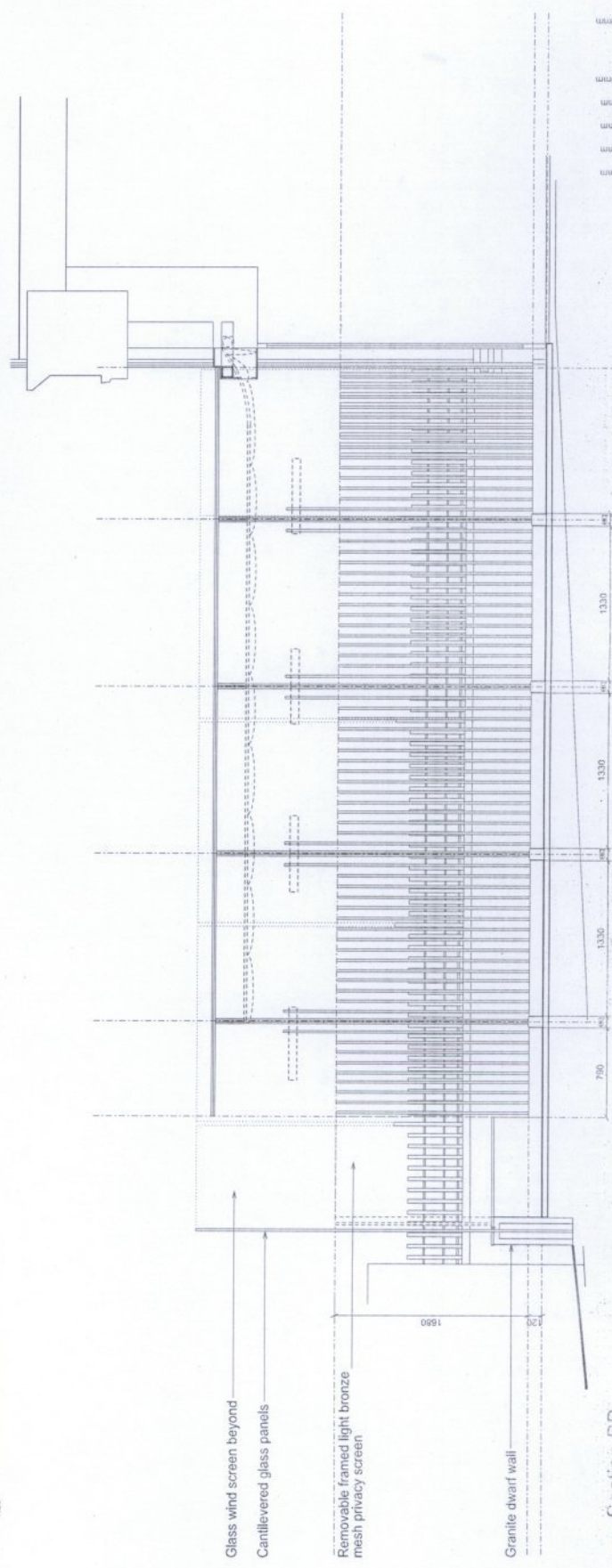
Project
 The Wellesley Hotel
 Cigar Terraces

Drawing Title
 North - south cross sections

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02 Section BB
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