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| CITY OF WESTMINSTER                 |  |                                       |                   |
| PLANNING APPLICATIONS SUB COMMITTEE | Date<br>19 June 2018                           | Classification<br>For General Release |                   |
| Report of<br>Director of Planning   |  | Ward(s) involved<br>Lancaster Gate    |                   |
| Subject of Report                   | Reading House Hallfield Estate, London, W2 6HD |                                       |                   |
| Proposal                            | Installation of gas pipe apparatus.            |                                       |                   |
| Agent                               | Mr Simon Williams                              |                                       |                   |
| On behalf of                        | Mrs Gemma Gosney                               |                                       |                   |
| Registered Number                   | 17/08516/FULL & 17/08517/LBC                   | Date amended/ completed               | 27 September 2017 |
| Date Application Received           | 22 September 2017                              |                                       |                   |
| Historic Building Grade             | II   |                                       |                   |
| Conservation Area                   | Hallfield Estate                               |                                       |                   |

## 1. RECOMMENDATION

1. Grant conditional permission.
2. Grant conditional listed building consent.
3. Agree the reasons for granting listed building consent as set out in Informative 1 of the draft decision letter.

## 2. SUMMARY

The Hallfield Estate is a mid 20th century housing estate located within the Hallfield Estate Conservation Area. The Estate comprises 14 residential blocks which are all Grade II listed, and other ancillary blocks. The applications relate to the installation of new gas pipes in association with upgraded supply to the remaining residents in Reading House.

The key issues in this case are:

- The impact of the proposed works on the character, appearance and special interest of the listed buildings and the Hallfield Estate Conservation Area.

It is considered that given the circumstances of this case, the harm to the special architectural and historical interest is outweighed by the overwhelming public benefit of providing updated gas supply to the residents. It is therefore recommended that conditional permission and listed building consent is granted subject to the conditions set out in the draft decision letter.

### 3. LOCATION PLAN



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4. PHOTOGRAPHS



Reading House

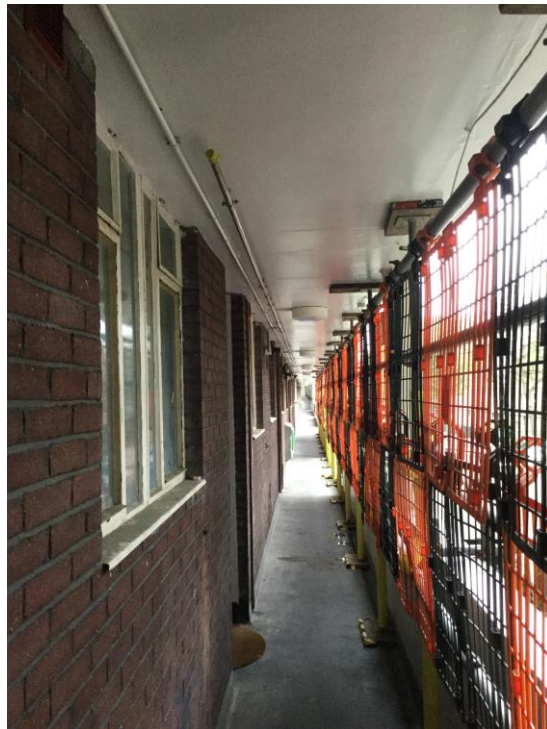


Ground, East Elevation

**Vertical pipe route between floors in the stairwell**



**Horizontal pipe route against the soffit**



## 5. CONSULTATIONS

### WARD COUNCILLORS:

Any comments to be reported verbally.

### HISTORIC ENGLAND:

No comment.

### SOUTH EAST BAYSWATER RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

Any comments to be reported verbally.

### BUILDING CONTROL:

Any comments to be reported verbally.

### ADJOINING OWNERS/OCCUPIERS AND OTHER REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED

No. Consulted: 80

Total No. of replies: 2

No. of objections: 2

Two objections received on some or all of the following grounds:

#### Design:

- Concern that the pipe work would add to the visual clutter of existing pipes, wires and cable attached to the building. any surplus pipe work should be removed.
- The pillars should be free of pipe work.
- There appears to be conflict with the pipe work using the same routes as the electrical trays that are carrying lighting and lateral mains.

#### Other:

- Work commenced in Autumn 2017.

PRESS ADVERTISEMENT / SITE NOTICE: Yes

## 6. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

### 6.1 The Application Site

This application relate to Reading House, which is one of the residential blocks on the Hallfield Estate, that was constructed between 1949-1955. The estate was designed by the architectural practice Tecton, and then executed by two of its members, Lindsay Drake and Sir Denys Lasdun. Lasdun in particular is one of the most respected mid 20<sup>th</sup> century architects and the estate, as designed and executed, is of particular architectural merit.

The residential buildings were Grade II listed in 2011 and all the buildings on the estate are included within the Hallfield Estate Conservation Area.

### 6.2 Recent Relevant History

16/10752/FULL and 16/10753/LBC: Installation of gas pipe apparatus at Marlow House. Granted on 04.01.2017.

18/03242/FULL and 18/03243/LBC: Variation of condition 2 of listed building consent dated 20 December 2016 (RN 16/17053/LBC) for the installation of gas pipe apparatus at Marlow House. NAMELY, Removal of condition 2 (linked with 18/03242/FULL). Pending consideration.

16/02898/COFUL and 16/02899/COLBC: Proposed replacement of the communal lighting with new surface mounted conduit/trunking and new lighting fittings to the deck access walkways to all blocks on the Hallfield Estate. Granted on 24.03.2017.

16/04961/COFUL and 16/10753/LBC: Mechanical extract fan installation to kitchens and bathrooms, localised external soffit insulation to ground floor level, and installation of bathroom towel-rail/radiator heating units. Granted on 19.12.2016.

## **7. THE PROPOSAL**

The application proposes the installation of externally located gas pipes. The proposed gas pipes would necessitate a new underground supply being run to the south-eastern corner of the building. The proposed gas pipe would rise from the ground at the south-eastern corner of the building then run vertically along the underside of the overhanging soffit to the eastern elevation. From here the proposed gas pipe would run vertically up the full height of the building within the stair core. On each floor of this 10 storey block, lateral branches are attached to the soffit of the balconies and small vertical branches would provide gas to individual flats.

The application has been submitted following a gas main failure that has affected 20 homes in Reading House. The supply was isolated on 21 June 2017 by Cadent (National Grid) as an immediate safety requirement. Works started to re-establish a supply to the 20 residents in October 2017. Therefore, the proposal seeks permission to install gas pipes to restore gas to the residents as well as providing a upgrade supply to flats in Reading House.

## **8. DETAILED CONSIDERATIONS**

### **8.1 Land Use**

The scheme does not raise any land use considerations.

### **8.2 Townscape and Design**

The main issue in this case is the impact of the proposal on the special architectural and historical interest of this grade II listed building in the Hallfield Estate Conservation Area.

Reading House is one of the six 10 storey blocks on the Hallfield Estate. The block consists of a pair of dog-leg staircases located either end of the building. The front façade is north facing and comprises of central located light and stairwell, with



cantilevered reinforced concrete access decks/ balconies on each floor running the length of the façade. The balconies are faced with a solid screen of pre-cast concrete panels that appear to float from the façade with alternate vertical links between each floor level. The stair wells at either end project slightly and are enclosed by concrete panels but faced in cream tiles. The front walls of the flats are well set back and are of brown concrete brick. The rear elevation (south elevation) is arranged in a chequered pattern of windows and alternating red concrete brick and blue engineering brick panels.

The 14 residential blocks and laundry building are listed for the distinctive and sophisticated aesthetic approach to social housing whereby the facades are treated like works of abstract art. The estate provided post-war mass housing and associated landscaping in an urban environment, as inspired by Le Corbusier's 'Radiant City'. The Hallfield Estate is the work of some of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century's most significant architects.

The statutory requirements are set out in the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. In particular Section 16 concerns listed building consents *"the local planning authority shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any feature of special architectural or historical interest which it possesses"*. Section 66 relates to planning permission affecting a listed building and states that *"the local planning authority shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any feature of special architectural or historical interest which it possesses"*. Section 72 set out duties relating to conservation areas where *"special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the area"*.

The applicant, tRiIO Strategic Partnership, is a strategic joint venture partnership between Skanska and Morrison Utility Services. They are responsible for replacing gas mains in London and the east of England. The applicant has explored the reuse of the existing pipe work and would normally seek to undertake upgrading works through a like for like replacement. However, in this case, they are unable to reuse the existing pipes for the reasons set out in the following paragraphs.

The applicant states that the existing gas pipes cannot be reused for the following reasons:

1. The applicant cannot access the service duct that provides the connection between the service risers in the building and the mains supply underground. The service duct was found to contain standing water and asbestos. The water in the duct would potentially contribute to pipe degradation. The duct is unventilated and any gas leakage has the potential to migrate into the adjacent building through duct apertures, leading to an uncontrolled situation where gas may build up. In addition, works to the foot of the building would damage the fabric of this part of the building.
2. The condition of the existing pipes and their buried location in the building would result in intrusive disruption to the building fabric. Also if internally installed any potential gas leak could be into a confined space with limited natural ventilation, leading to a dangerous gas build up this is a high risk option in a Multi-Occupancy building.
3. The gas riser in the flats is located adjacent to neighbouring services such as electrical mains and works to the riser may disrupt other services.

The existing pipes are connected to the underground mains gas supply via a service duct that is located at the foot of the north elevation, large concrete slabs cover the service duct. There are several full height vertical risers located in the flats (usually in the kitchen adjacent to the main front door of the flat). Following investigations, the pipe network had significantly deteriorated with pipe barrel corrosion being the predominant identified condition failing.

The proposed new gas pipes would be visible in many private and public views. The balconies are a fundamental feature in the design of Reading House and a recurring feature across the estate. The single vertical riser is discreetly located against a utilitarian wall of the stairway and is partially obscured by the forward concrete features. However, the lateral gas pipe attached to the soffit of the access decks/ balconies above would be clearly seen in many public views and their number exacerbates this.

The existing balconies and their soffits are largely free of fixtures, albeit there are a few examples of flues, otherwise when viewed from the ground the clutter free balconies, including soffits, significantly contribute to the elegant appearance of this intrinsic feature of this grade II listed building. Therefore, the proposal would have a harmful impact on the significance of the building, and would fail to preserve the special architectural interest of this listed building and undermine the wider architectural integrity of the estate. The degree of harm is less than substantial and therefore Paragraph 134 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2012 states that the harm caused is weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use.

A similar proposal was submitted in 2016 and granted in early 2017 with a temporary 3 year permission to replace gas pipes following a leak at Marlow House. The proposal for externally located gas pipes was considered harmful to the special architectural and historical interest of the building however, the improved health and social wellbeing of the occupants as a result of reconnecting the residents to a safe gas supply outweighs the harm to the building in the short term. Therefore the proposed gas pipework was considered acceptable in design terms; however, a condition was attached to the permission to enable the applicant to carry out full and comprehensive investigation works to explore alternative options for reusing/ upgrading the gas supply to this and other blocks on the Hallfield Estate.

The applicant has submitted a detailed document entitled 'Technical Note: A Review of Gas Network Pipe Replacement Options for Reading House, Hallfield Estate, London, W2 6HD'. In this document, legislation and regulations are set out in Section 2 and identify key parts where gas pipe installers and operators must comply. In this document, a justification for externally located gas pipe is set out and concludes that it is not viable to contemplate the reuse of the internal gas pipes as installed in the legacy gas system and therefore an external gas network configuration is proposed.

Therefore, in this specific context having considered the information submitted as part of this application, the departure from policy DES1, DES5, DES9 and DES10 in the UDP and S25 and S28 in the City Plan is justified and recommended for approval.



**8.3 Residential Amenity**

The proposal does not raise any residential amenity concerns.

**8.4 Transportation/Parking**

Not applicable.

**8.5 Economic Considerations**

No economic considerations are applicable for a development of this size

**8.6 Access**

The proposals do not affect the access arrangements to the flats in this building.

**8.7 Other UDP/Westminster Policy Considerations**

No other applicable.

**8.8 London Plan**

This application raises no strategic issues.

**8.9 National Policy/Guidance Considerations**

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

**8.10 Planning Obligations**

Planning obligations are not relevant in the determination of this application.

**8.11 Environmental Impact Assessment**

The application is of insufficient scale to require an environmental impact assessment..

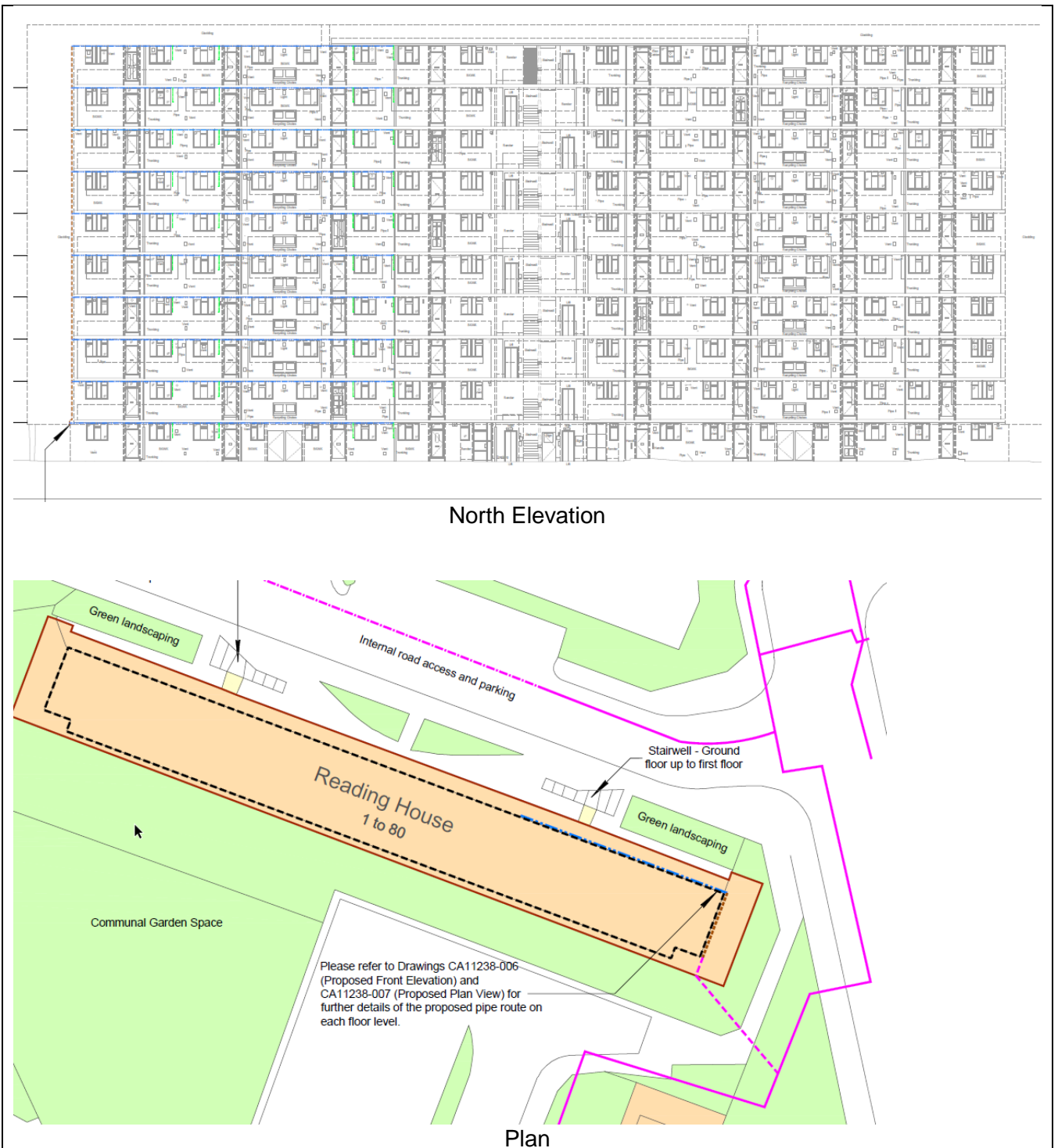
**8.12 Other Issues**

None relevant.

(Please note: All the application drawings and other relevant documents and Background Papers are available to view on the Council's website)

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUERIES ABOUT THIS REPORT PLEASE CONTACT THE PRESENTING OFFICER: KIMBERLEY DAVIES BY EMAIL AT [kdavies1@westminster.gov.uk](mailto:kdavies1@westminster.gov.uk)

## 9. KEY DRAWINGS



**DRAFT DECISION LETTER – 17/08516/FULL**

**Address:** Reading House , Hallfield Estate, London, W2 6HD

**Proposal:** Installation of gas pipe apparatus.

**Reference:** 17/08516/FULL

**Plan Nos:** CA11238-001, CA11238-002, CA11238-003A, CA11238-004, CA11238-005, CA11238-006A, CA11238-007A, Heritage and Design Statement November 2017. Technical Note: A review of Gas Network Pipe Replacement Options for Reading House rec on 10.05.2018.

**Case Officer:** Shui-Fung Siu

**Direct Tel. No.** 020 7641 2522

**Recommended Condition(s) and Reason(s)**

- 1 The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the drawings and other documents issued on this decision letter, and any drawings approved subsequently by the City Council as local planning authority subject to any conditions on this decision letter.

Reason:

For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

- 2 Except for piling, excavation and demolition work, you must carry out any building work which can be heard at the boundary of the site only: , o between 08.00 and 18.00 Monday to Friday; , o between 08.00 and 13.00 on Saturday; , o not at all on Sundays, bank holidays and public holidays. , , You must carry out piling, excavation and demolition work only: , o between 08.00 and 18.00 Monday to Friday; and , o not at all on Saturday, Sundays, bank holidays and public holidays. , , Noisy work must not take place outside the hours otherwise agreed through a Control of Pollution Act 1974 section 61 prior consent in certain circumstances (for example, to meet police traffic restrictions, in an emergency or in the interests of public safety) (C11AB)

Reason:

To protect the environment of neighbouring occupiers. The proposal is in S29 and S32 of Westminster's City Plan (November 2016) and ENV 6 of our Unitary Development Plan that we adopted in January 2007. (R11AC)

- 3 All new work to the outside of the building must match existing original work in terms of the choice of materials, method of construction and finished appearance. This applies unless differences are shown on the drawings we have approved or are required by conditions to this permission. (C26AA)

Reason:

To protect the special architectural or historic interest of this listed building and to make sure the development contributes to the character and appearance of the Hallfield Estate Conservation Area. This is as set out in S25 and S28 of Westminster's City Plan (November 2016) and DES 1, DES 10 (A) and paras 10.108 to 10.146 of our Unitary Development Plan that we adopted in January 2007. (R26FD)

- 4 The gas pipes shall be finished/ painted in a colour to match the adjacent material and thereafter maintained in a matching colour and finish.

**Reason:**

To protect the special architectural or historic interest of this listed building and to make sure the development contributes to the character and appearance of the Hallfield Conservation Area. This is as set out in S25 and S28 of Westminster's City Plan (November 2016) and DES 1, DES 10 (A) and paras 10.108 to 10.146 of our Unitary Development Plan that we adopted in January 2007. (R26FD)

**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. We have made available detailed advice in the form of our statutory policies in Westminster's City Plan (November 2016), Westminster's City Plan: Strategic Policies Consolidated Draft Version incorporating Basement Revision, Mixed Use Revision, Regulation 19 and Main Modifications dated June 2016, Unitary Development Plan, Supplementary Planning documents, planning briefs and other informal written guidance, as well as offering a full pre application advice service, in order to ensure that applicant has been given every opportunity to submit an application which is likely to be considered favourably. In addition, where appropriate, further guidance was offered to the applicant at the validation stage.

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**DRAFT DECISION LETTER – 17/08517/LBC**

**Address:** Reading House , Hallfield Estate, London, W2 6HD

**Proposal:** Installation of gas pipe apparatus.

**Plan Nos:** CA11238-001, CA11238-002, CA11238-003A, CA11238-004, CA11238-005, CA11238-006A, CA11238-007A, Heritage and Design Statement November 2017.  
Technical Note: A review of Gas Network Pipe Replacement Options for Reading House rec on 10.05.2018.

**Case Officer:** Shui-Fung Siu

**Direct Tel. No.** 020 7641 2522

**Recommended Condition(s) and Reason(s) or Reason(s) for Refusal:**

- 1 The works hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the drawings and other documents listed on this decision letter, and any drawings approved subsequently by the City of Westminster's local planning authority pursuant to any conditions on this decision letter.

Reason:

To avoid any doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

- 2 All new work and improvements inside and outside the building must match existing original adjacent work in terms of the choice of materials, method of construction and finished appearance. This is unless differences are shown on the approved drawings or are required in connection with the permission. (C27AA)

Reason:

To protect the special architectural or historic interest of this building and to make sure the development contributes to the character and appearance of the Hallfield Estate Conservation Area. This is as set out in S25 of Westminster's City Plan (November 2016) and DES 1 and paras 10.108 to 10.146 of our Unitary Development Plan that we adopted in January 2007. (R27AC)

- 3 The gas pipes shall be finished/ painted in a colour which matches the adjacent material and thereafter maintained in a matching colour and finish.

Reason:

To protect the special architectural or historic interest of this building and to make sure the development contributes to the character and appearance of the Hallfield Estate Conservation Area. This is as set out in S25 and S28 of Westminster's City Plan (November 2016) and DES 1 and paras 10.108 to 10.146 of our Unitary Development Plan that we adopted in January 2007. (R27AC)

**Informative(s):**

- 1 SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR GRANTING CONDITIONAL LISTED BUILDING CONSENT -  
In reaching the decision to grant listed building consent with conditions, the City Council has had regard to the relevant policies in the National Planning Policy Framework March 2012, the London Plan March 2016, Westminster's City Plan (November 2016), and the City of Westminster Unitary Development Plan adopted January 2007, as well as relevant supplementary planning guidance, representations received and all other material considerations.

The City Council decided that the proposed works would not harm the character of this building of special architectural or historic interest.

In reaching this decision the following were of particular relevance:

S25 and S28 of Westminster's City Plan: Strategic Policies and DES 10 including paras 10.130 to 10.146 of the Unitary Development Plan, and paragraph 2.4 of our Supplementary Planning Guidance: Repairs and Alterations to Listed Buildings.

Please note: the full text for informatives can be found in the Council's Conditions, Reasons & Policies handbook, copies of which can be found in the Committee Room whilst the meeting is in progress, and on the Council's website.

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