

The submitted information seeks to partially discharge condition 4 of planning permission HGY/2017/2220 requiring details of minor artefacts and structures (eg. furniture, refuse or other storage units, signs etc.) by providing retrospective details of the lighting installed in the Town Hall Square.

Also condition 13 of planning permission HGY/2017/2220 refers to lighting requiring a Public Realm Lighting Strategy to demonstrate that public lighting is bat sensitive in accordance with the 2017 Preliminary Ecological

Introduction & Context

This note sets out the Local Planning Authority's (LPA) conservation position regarding the unauthorized and inadequate installation of public realm lighting within Hornsey Town Hall Square.

The site occupies an incredibly sensitive heritage location, situated entirely within the Crouch End Conservation Area and immediately framing Hornsey Town Hall—a globally recognized masterpiece statutorily designated as a Grade II* Listed Building.

The design for the refurbishment of the civic square was approved with a view to retain the character and enhance the quality of the civic square which sits at the very heart of Crouch End CA and constitutes the contributing setting of both grade II* Town Hall and grade II Broadway Annex and Electricity Board office and Showroom.

The scheme was consistently developed, also with contribution the local community, and successfully approved with the intent to recreate a heritage design for Town Hall Square, with original landscape, material finishes and urban furniture be reinstated.

The approved design was largely inspired by the original design for the square that ensured spatial continuity between the entrance to the former Town Hall and its public square whose design was meant to be aesthetically sympathetic to the design, materials and colour palette of the listed buildings, so to reinforce their character and legible hierarchy.

The proposed lighting was only outlined throughout the supporting documentation to the main applications yet consistently illustrated as a reinterpretation of the original Art Deco globe lights that also characterised the aesthetic and refined architectural quality of the interiors of the grade II* Town hall.

It is the Conservation officer's position that the mix of lighting design as currently installed in the public square is highly incongruous, harmful to the setting of the Grade II* heritage asset and fails to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

It should be noted that the lack of provision of detailed lighting design in the original consent does not grant carte blanche to harm a heritage asset.

The Legislative and Policy Framework

These comments are governed by the strict statutory duties imposed by the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990:

Section 66(1): Requires the LPA to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

Section 72(1): Requires that special attention be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.

Paragraphs 202-215 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) dictate that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and must be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance. Great weight must be given to the asset's conservation, irrespective of whether the potential harm amounts to 'substantial' or 'less than substantial' harm.

The Scope of Condition 4

The applicant seems to contend that because the parent planning permission HGY/2017/2220 did not include specific type and design of the proposed lighting for the Town Hall Square, and a condition was imposed to control the details of the lighting design, the LPA cannot retroactively restrict the installed design. The LPA fundamentally rejects this position.

Condition 4 of HGY/2017/2220 explicitly reserves control over the details of: "...minor artefacts and structures (e.g., furniture, refuse or other storage units, signs etc.)"

While public lamp columns and lighting luminaires are not explicitly named in the parent permission, they fall squarely within the definition of "minor structures and artefacts" affecting the public realm, and this is a standard planning condition designed to protect the visual amenity of the civic square.

Crucially, the parent permission was granted based on a holistic design scheme. The approved Design and Access Statement and original design illustrations and included 1940's historic photos respectively featured wall mounted and lamp post Art Deco globe lighting.

These lighting elements consistently mirrored Reginald Uren's original 1930s architectural vision, responding directly to the age, clean geometries, and materials of the framing listed buildings.

The 1940's photos held at Haringey Archives show the public square was originally characterised by capped and uncapped globe lights on lamp posts. Later photos from the '60s up to recent years demonstrate a progressive loss of original lighting design and consistency and increase in visual clutter generated by uncharacteristic and utilitarian lamp posts of various type and design

The current combination of Art Deco inspired globe lighting and utilitarian pole lighting is the result of insufficiently designed, utilitarian lighting solutions that have been unlawfully implemented in two separate stages, initially adjacent to the Town Hall and subsequently across the rest of the public square.

The applicant did not seek any advice from the LPA about the design and technical compliance of the lighting ahead of its unconsented implementation, and did so at their own risk.

The submitted justification for the mix of globe and pole lighting based on the alleged split character of the public square and the wider development site at the rear of the Town hall, is retrospective and contrary to the glaringly unitary historic character of the civic square with its framing buildings all of the same age, architectural style, materiality.

The application references the detracting mix of lampposts that have taken place from the 1960's onward, and departs radically from the approved, art-deco, globe lighting illustrated in the main application, thus substituting sympathetic, context-driven design with an inadequate, standardized commercial iteration that introduces visual clutter and architectural dissonance.

The emphasis placed on compliance with lighting requirements, secured by design standards and ecological sensitivity, the insistence that the lighting scheme to the Town Hall Square was always conceived as being provided by a combination of both modern and heritage style lanterns, confirm that the conservation of the unitary, historic character of the civic square was never a priority and a design driver for the lighting scheme.

Supporting Appeal Precedents

The principle that illumination and column design can cause fatal harm to a heritage setting—even when technical lighting performance is acceptable—is supported by the Planning Inspectorate.

The Principle of Visual Dissonance in Heritage Settings:

In Appeal Ref: APP/K3605/W/24/3357865 (Kingston Grammar School v Elmbridge Borough Council, 2025), the Planning Inspector dismissed an appeal involving lighting infrastructure near a highly sensitive historic setting (Hampton Court Palace environs). The Inspector reinforced that even where trees or modern interventions exist, the introducing of inappropriate lighting structures/effects during sensitive hours unacceptably detracts from the open, historic nature of a setting.

Harm from Scale, Materiality, and Form:

In Appeal Ref: APP/E5330/Z/25/3359606 (16 Nelson Road, Greenwich Conservation Area, 2025), the Inspector dismissed an appeal concerning external illumination elements on a listed building terrace. The Inspector emphasized that under Section 72(1), even minor deviations from restrained, traditional design language fail to preserve or enhance a conservation area. The judgment noted that design must actively take account of the specific architectural history of the building, rather than deploying off-the-shelf commercial fixtures.

The Requirement for Detailed Modelling:

Landmark appeal decisions consistently dictate that where an applicant seeks to introduce modern lighting into a Grade II* or Grade I setting, the burden of proof lies with the developer to

provide exact modelling (including day/night rendering), and this legal standard stem from the high statutory threshold protecting highly designated assets.

The submitted application fails to provide comprehensive day/night visualisations and lux-level contour modelling. By failing to clear Condition 4 with precise specifications, the implemented scheme has bypassed the rigorous scrutiny required for an asset of national importance.

Without exact modelling, it is not possible for the applicant to discharge Section 66 duties.

Historic England's formal advice note, The Setting of Heritage Assets (GPA3), explicitly notes that "光" (light intrusion) and "light pollution" can radically alter the night-time setting of an asset. Consequently, Accurate Visual Representations (AVRs)—specifically daytime and night-time photomontages—should be submitted to safely assess the impact.

Nature of the Harm

Hornsey Town Hall Square is not merely a thoroughfare; it is a carefully balanced civic space where the hard landscaping, spatial openness, and vertical structures interact directly with the brick and bronze facades of the Town Hall. The installed lighting fails on two fronts:

by day the physical form, profile, and materials of the columns act as an architectural anomaly, clashing with the strict, sophisticated lines of the Grade II* listed building and flanking listed showrooms, this degrading the visual amenity of the Crouch End Conservation Area.

By night the quality, color temperature, and distribution of the illumination fail to respect the atmospheric significance of the civic square, deviating entirely from the sensitive, integrated concept originally promised via the original application.

With its inconsistent mix of modern globe lights and uncharacteristic pole lighting the implemented lighting scheme very undesirably departs from the original lighting design for the civic square, would clash with the style and design of the listed buildings framing the square , and would distractingly clutter their setting. The implemented lighting scheme is also contrary to the adopted policies for street furniture and historic lighting included at paragraphs 14.11 to 14.13 of the adopted Conservation Area appraisal and would detract from the overall quality of the approved scheme. Especially the utilitarian, prominent pole lampposts installed across the public square are inappropriate for this unique heritage context, would negatively impact the setting of the Listed Buildings and the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

This cumulative, largely unjustified, and unnecessary negative impact deriving from the installed lighting would lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of the heritage assets affected, and any level of harm is in principle not sustainable development, should be thoroughly and convincingly justified and is highly undesirable from the conservation stance.

Conclusion

The outline lighting design approved with the main consent was meant to be further developed, detailed consistently with the historic evidence included in the approved Design & Access Statement, and should have been approved through discharge of planning conditions before being implemented; the main consent does not absolve the developer from

their statutory requirement to protect the setting of a Grade II* building. Condition 4 provides the clear legal mechanism to regulate public realm structures including the lighting on the civic square.

Because the current, inconsistent lighting scheme completely undermines the contextual design narrative established during the application stage, detracts from the character and appearance of the civic square, and represents a clear breach of local heritage policies and the statutory requirements of Sections 66 and 72 of the Act.

It is therefore not possible to accept the current lighting installation as a satisfactory solution to the joint public realm requirements and conservation requirements, and it is recommended to submit a fully revised, context-appropriate scheme modelled closely on the Art Deco globe designs originally

Kind regards,

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