



**Places for London
Property Development**

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Our ref: TfL/Places/VSH/BH – Highgate Station
Your ref: –
Planning Portal ref: PP-12891917

Haringey Council London Borough,
Planning, Regeneration & Economy,
Level 6, River Park House,
225 High Road,
London,
N22 8HQ

Dear Sir / Madam,

**Highgate Underground Station – Vacant Station Building, Priory Gardens, N6 5QT
Full Planning Application for Relevant Demolition in a Conservation Area**

Places for London ('Places') is the commercial property company wholly owned by Transport for London and responsible for the management and development of its non-operational property assets. We are submitting an application for planning permission for demolition of a vacant and derelict station building located off Priory Gardens, to the north of Highgate Underground Station. The application is submitted in the interests of urgent safety and health, as well as maintaining security of operational infrastructure.

Application Submission

This planning application for relevant demolition within a conservation area (CA) comprises the following documents submitted via the Planning Portal today (ref: PP-12891917). The scope of application documentation was discussed and agreed with the Council's Principal Conservation Officer, Elizabetta Tonnazi.

1. Application covering letter and statement (this letter)
2. Completed application form and Certificate B
3. Structural Condition Report prepared by Bellamy Wallace Partnership, Consulting Structural Engineers
4. Existing Site Photographs
5. Heritage Impact Assessment prepared by Portico Heritage
6. Bat Surveys Report prepared by Temple
7. Demolition Method Statement (Safe System of Work) prepared by Cleashar, demolition contractor
8. Application plans:
 - i. Site Location Plan @ I:1250 (LULCORE-TFL-MAC-N075-DRG-GL-00001/rev P01)
 - ii. Block Plan @I:500 (LULCORE-TFL-MAC-N075-DRG-GL-00002/rev P01)

- iii. Existing Ground Floor Plan and Extent of Demolition @ 1:50 (LULCORE-TFL-MAC-N075-DRG-GL-00003/rev P01)
- iv. Existing Sections and Elevations and Extent of Demolition @1:50 (LULCORE-TFL-MAC-N075-DRG-GL-00004/rev P01)

There is no planning application fee for relevant demolition within a conservation area (Town and Country Planning (Fees for Applications, Deemed Applications, Requests and Site Visits) (England) Regulations 2012' (as amended)).

Background

The vacant station building is located just off Priory Gardens, on the northern side of the railway cutting immediately above Highgate (Northern Line) station concourse. It formed part of the Highgate disused surface railway station, itself part of a now closed branch of the Great Northern Railway. It is a single storey brick building with a slate roof. As set out in the *Heritage Impact Assessment*, parts of it were originally built as a 'waiting shelter' on the upside as part of Highgate surface level station which opened in 1867. It has been significantly altered since then. When the surface level station was rebuilt in the 1880s, the upside shelter and the platform it served became redundant. Its canopy was removed and some time after this (date unknown) the building was considerably altered and used as a dwelling. The station was rebuilt in 1939, but the redundant 'waiting shelter' remained. The high level station closed in 1954 when the branch line was closed to passengers. Since then the remnants of the high level station have remained, with the tracks and embankments being gradually re-claimed by nature. The redundant 'waiting shelter' remained, was extended with a single storey wooden structure to the west, and is thought to have been occupied at one time by staff employed at the underground station. It was last occupied more than 12 years ago.

Despite security fencing, the building was vandalised a number of times and in May 2023 it was subject to an arson attack which completely destroyed the wooden extension to the west, destroyed the roof of the brick link structure, and damaged the roof of the northern end of the brick station building. Elements of the building are in a state of structural collapse following the damage. The remaining derelict building is dangerous and a safety and health risk.

The building is not statutorily or locally listed, but is located within the Highgate CA. The nearby 'Disused 1940 Highgate Interchange Station' is locally listed. The Northern Line Underground station below is operational and equipment associated with it is located in parts of the disused surface railway; the application site therefore forms part of the operational railway and no public access is permitted.

Demolition Within the Conservation Area

Planning permission is required for the substantial demolition of an unlisted building within a CA. We make the case for granting planning permission on the following basis.

Safety and Health

Under S196D of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 it is an offence to carry out such demolition without the required planning permission. However there is a defence against prosecution in the case of demolition work that is urgently necessary in the interests of safety or health:

"It is a defence for a person accused of an offence under this section to prove the following matters -

- (a) *"that the relevant demolition was urgently necessary in the interests of safety or health;*
- (b) *"that it was not practicable to secure safety or health by works of repair or works for affording temporary support or shelter;*
- (c) *"that the relevant demolition was the minimum measure necessary; and*

- (d) “that notice in writing of the relevant demolition was given to the local planning authority as soon as reasonably practicable.”

Therefore, ideally, planning permission should be sought and granted in advance of the demolition of the vacant station building. However, if it is not possible for the planning permission to be granted before it is necessary to demolish the building, then Places would rely on the defence set out above, based on the explanation and circumstances set out below. The safety and health issues that are raised provide a compelling case for demolition of the building and require that planning permission should be granted without delay in accordance with paragraph II of the NPPF.

Demolition is necessary in the interests of safety or health

Following the arson attack, Places commissioned a *Structural Condition Report* from Bellamy Wallace Partnership, Consulting Structural Engineers. The structural report sets out:

- The vacant and derelict building is a single storey load bearing masonry structure, with what appears to be a close couple cut timber roof structure over.
- The linked adjacent wooden building was burnt to the ground.
- Fire damage has occurred to the vacant building, however, given its construction, it had not suffered the same effects as had the timber framed building adjacent.
- A visual inspection of the vacant station building revealed movement apparent to the existing masonry walls; evidentially, this appeared to be not only because of the effects from the fire, but also historical foundation movement and this was noted with regards to historical repair work and monitoring points noted at various locations, which could suggest that previous subsidence has occurred over time.
- The roof structure had areas of existing slates lost. While it was not possible to ascertain the extent of all damage to the roof timbers, the ceilings had started to partially collapse internally.
- At the rear entrance area, a ground bearing slab was noted, however internally, there appears to be a raised timber structure to most of the building.
- The walls and ceiling of the kitchen area appeared to have been effected, with extensive vertical cracks noted to the rear load bearing wall next to the entrance. The remaining walls were clad in timber boarding, with the structure not visible at the time of the inspection and cracking to the ceiling boards noted above. The engineers note that this rear wall is the load bearing element for the existing roof, which spans front to rear.
- In the other room, the ceiling consisted of tongue and groove boards, which had partially collapsed, exposing what appeared to be a close couple roof structure above. Both vertical and horizontal cracking was noted to internal walls in this room.

Generally the building is in a poor structural condition, both internally and externally. The movement of the existing masonry is likely to be historical and is evidenced by various areas of stepped cracking in the existing masonry, the clear rebuilding of elements of masonry panels, movement across the tops of most windows and previous installations which sought to mitigate. Movement appears to have occurred at the eaves positions in some locations which implies some deflection of the roof structure due to failure because of the fire and associated horizontal spread affecting the top of the existing walls. It is also apparent that the existing foundations have been affected by surrounding vegetation.

The report concludes that the building is generally in a poor state of repair due to both the historical foundation movement and the fire damage. The roof structure is currently providing restraint at the eaves of the load bearing walls but is now affected by fire damage; as a result of the possible loss of restraint from the roof, the walls are now unstable and liable to possible collapse. The timber roof elements now appear to be in a hazardous state and liable to collapse. And the load bearing walls themselves are affected by historical foundation movement and also the effects of the recent fire and their load carrying capacities are therefore brought into

question (even notwithstanding the possible loss of restraint from the affected roof structure). The conclusion is “*we would suggest that this remaining building is currently categorised as a dangerous structure*”. It is recommended, based on health and safety, that the building be carefully demolished.

It is noted that there is asbestos present within the property, albeit in a relatively small amount and location, and this would need to be removed in line with HSE Approved Code of Practice LI43 2nd Edition.

Please also note that while LUL has in the past and continues to seek to prevent unauthorised access to this site (including by installation of new security fencing following the arson attack) it is never possible to completely prevent unauthorised access. This is particularly the case at this site with the disused surface railway station attracting social media ‘urban explorers’ in addition to vandalism and other anti-social behaviour. In addition there is, of course, legitimate access to this part of the station in order to gain access to ventilation and other equipment associated with the underground station below. Demolition of the vacant station building is necessary to protect the public, the safety and health of LUL and TfL staff, and all visitors to this site, whether authorised or not.

It is not practicable to secure safety or health by works of repair or works for affording temporary support or shelter

Given the perilous state of the structural walls and restraining roof structure, there is no practicable temporary support or shelter that would secure the building’s future.

The relevant demolition is the minimum measure necessary

This is a very small building with all structural elements failing and so there are no elements that could be retained. The relevant demolition is therefore the minimum necessary to secure safety and health.

Notice in writing

If we have to demolish the building in advance of receiving planning permission, we would notify the Council in writing as soon as reasonably practicable.

In addition to the compelling case for the protection of public safety and health, we also make submissions in respect of built and natural heritage.

Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment

Places has commissioned a *Heritage Impact Assessment* (HIA) from Portico Heritage.

This confirms that while the building is in the Highgate CA, it is neither statutorily or locally listed. The ‘Disused 1940 Highgate Interchange Station’, close by, is locally listed. The HIA provides considerable history for the remnants of the disused surface railway and the Underground below. It confirms that the vacant station building that is to be demolished has been subject to considerable alteration, both in form and materials, since it was first constructed in the mid-late 1860s as a station ‘waiting shelter’. The waiting shelter was no longer needed from the 1880s when a new island platform was built and the original side platforms and buildings became disused. The station was rebuilt again in 1939–41; while the waiting shelter still remained, it was not required for use as part of the station. The surface line finally closed in 1962, with passenger services having ceased in 1954.

The alterations undertaken to the vacant station building are detailed in paragraphs 2.17 – 2.27 of the HIA, culminating in the building’s present derelict and dangerous condition.

In accordance with the NPPF (particularly paragraphs 200 – 214) the HIA considers the impacts of demolition on the designated heritage asset ie. the character and appearance of the Highgate CA, and also the undesignated heritage asset ie. the setting of the nearby locally listed surface level station and structures.

Highgate CA

The HIA considers the Council's *Conservation Area Appraisal & Management Plan* (2013) which notes that the disused surface Highgate Station makes a positive contribution to the CA, but considers that *"it is perhaps the perception of its presence that contributes to the actual character and appearance rather than its physical presence which is barely visible"*. Indeed, the HIA finds that, in terms of the character and appearance of the CA, it is the wooded, sylvan context that the railway cutting now provides to Archway Road and Priory Gardens as well as the entrances to the underground station that most meaningfully impact the character of the CA in a positive way.

Locally Listed Buildings

In terms of the setting of the late 1930s surface level station, the HIA finds that:

"3.17 The nearby vacant station building, by the 1930s, had been much altered, extended and re-configured in a functional rather than coherent way. It had not had a direct relationship with the operation of the railway for nearly 70 years at this point and the modern architecture of the 'new' station made it even more of an anachronism.

"3.18 The subsequent vandalism and damage by arson have rendered the structure visually, physically and structurally unsound and dangerous, creating an eyesore that detracts from the area where glimpsed from the eastern side of the railway cutting."

Summary of Significance

The HIA concludes that the vacant station building has the remnants of some minor local historical interest in being made up, in part, of an original element of the first iteration of the Highgate Station. However, its original purpose (as a passenger shelter) was soon redundant and its functional connection with the operation of the railway was severed. Its subsequent conversion and alteration for residential purposes was undertaken in a functional manner with little thought given to, for example, the choice of materials. And any remaining architectural contextuality was further diminished when the operational railway station was comprehensively redeveloped in the 'moderne' style in the late 1930s. Other than providing an eastern access point to Highgate Underground Station, the site has little connection with this part of the CA – either through character or visual connectivity. The only glimpse being from the steep footpath which runs along the northern edge of the site. As above, in reality it is the wooded, sylvan, context that the railway cutting now provides that most meaningfully impacts the character of the CA in a positive way – rather than any of the remnant structures at its base – which are almost entirely unseen from the road. It adds that the contribution made by the vacant, derelict station building is negative.

Policy Compliance

The HIA assesses the impacts of the proposed demolition of the vacant station building on the significance of the CA and the setting of the locally listed 1939-41 station, in accordance with the NPPF and policy DM9 (*Management of the Historic Environment*) of the Council's *Development Management Development Plan Document* (DPD) (2017). It concludes that the demolition of the vacant station building will not lead to either substantial or less than substantial harm to any designated heritage asset ie. the Highgate CA (NPPF paragraphs 207-208), rather it will remove a building that is damaged, dangerous and an eyesore. Similarly, the HIA concludes that the proposal will not lead to any harm or loss of significance to the locally listed 1940s station

complex. Even if it was believed by others that a small element of less-than-substantial harm would be caused by the loss of the building, this needs to be considered within the context of the assessment that it is a dangerous structure that is a visual eyesore and its removal has the potential to enhance the CA and approach to Highgate Underground Station from the east. Accordingly, even aside from the requirement for the building to be demolished for safety and health reasons, the proposed demolition accords with the NPPF and the Council's *Development Management DPD*.

Conserving the Natural Environment, Biodiversity and Open Space

Protected Species

We commissioned Temple to undertake a bats *Preliminary Roost Assessment* (PRA) to identify whether there are any bats roosting in the derelict building and to advise on any constraints and mitigation that should be undertaken to avoid harm to protected species. This was considered particularly relevant at this site which is relatively close to bat roost habitats within the Highgate tunnels, and also Highgate and Queens Woods, which are suitable for roosting, foraging and commuting bats.

No evidence of roosting bats was found during the PRA and the vacant station building was assessed as having negligible suitability for roosting bats. In addition, demolition is not anticipated to result in any loss of habitat for foraging and commuting bats. No further surveys for bats are recommended before the required demolition of the vacant station building. A number of measures are recommended to prevent the disturbance of roosting, foraging and commuting bats including measures to minimise the impacts of artificial lighting, noise, vibration and dust. We would be happy to discuss suitable planning conditions with officers, should they be considered necessary.

Ecological Corridor

The site falls within an Ecological Corridor designated in the Local Plan. The required demolition will be undertaken via TfL's Safe System of Work which includes measures to protect bats – please see details above. The required demolition will protect and enhance the nature conservation value of the site in accordance with the Council's *Development Management DPD*, 2017 (policy DMI9 *Nature Conservation*).

Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC)

The site also sits within a SINC of Metropolitan Importance, as part of the Parkland Walk Ecologically Valuable site. However, please note that the site does not form part of the Parkland Walk and public access is not permitted to the site for security, safety and health reasons. Again, the required demolition will protect and enhance the nature conservation value of the SINC in accordance with the Council's *Development Management DPD*, 2017 (policy DMI3 *Open Space and Biodiversity*).

Metropolitan Open Land

The site is within designated Metropolitan Open Land (MOL). In accordance with the *Strategic Policies DPD*, 2017 (policy SPI3 *Open Space and Biodiversity*), the required demolition would preserve the MOL and enhance its openness.

Green Chain

Similarly, the required demolition would preserve the nature conservation value of the Green Chain in accordance with the *Strategic Policies DPD*, 2017 (policy SPI3 *Open Space and Biodiversity*). Please note that the site does not provide public access, recreation or public

footpaths, which are considered by the DPD to be important characteristics of Green Chains; the required demolition therefore has no impacts on these matters.

Safe System of Work

Also submitted to support the planning application is our demolition *Method Statement and Safe System of Work*, prepared by LUL's contractor, Cleshar. This will ensure that demolition is undertaken in full compliance with TfL and LUL's stringent *Health, Safety and Environmental* requirements and all relevant legislation, best practice and guidance. This document also incorporates the recommendations from the Bat Surveys Report and includes an appropriate *Risk Assessment*.

Concluding Remarks

We trust that the reports and plans submitted with this application are sufficient for the council to determine this planning application for demolition of the vacant station building, and we look forward to receiving the Council's approval shortly. However, should you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me or Luke Burroughs.

Yours faithfully



Brendan Hodges
Planning Manager (Residential and Commercial)
Places for London

cc.

Riyan Adiputra –
Matthew McCabe –
Edmund Bird –

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Transport for London