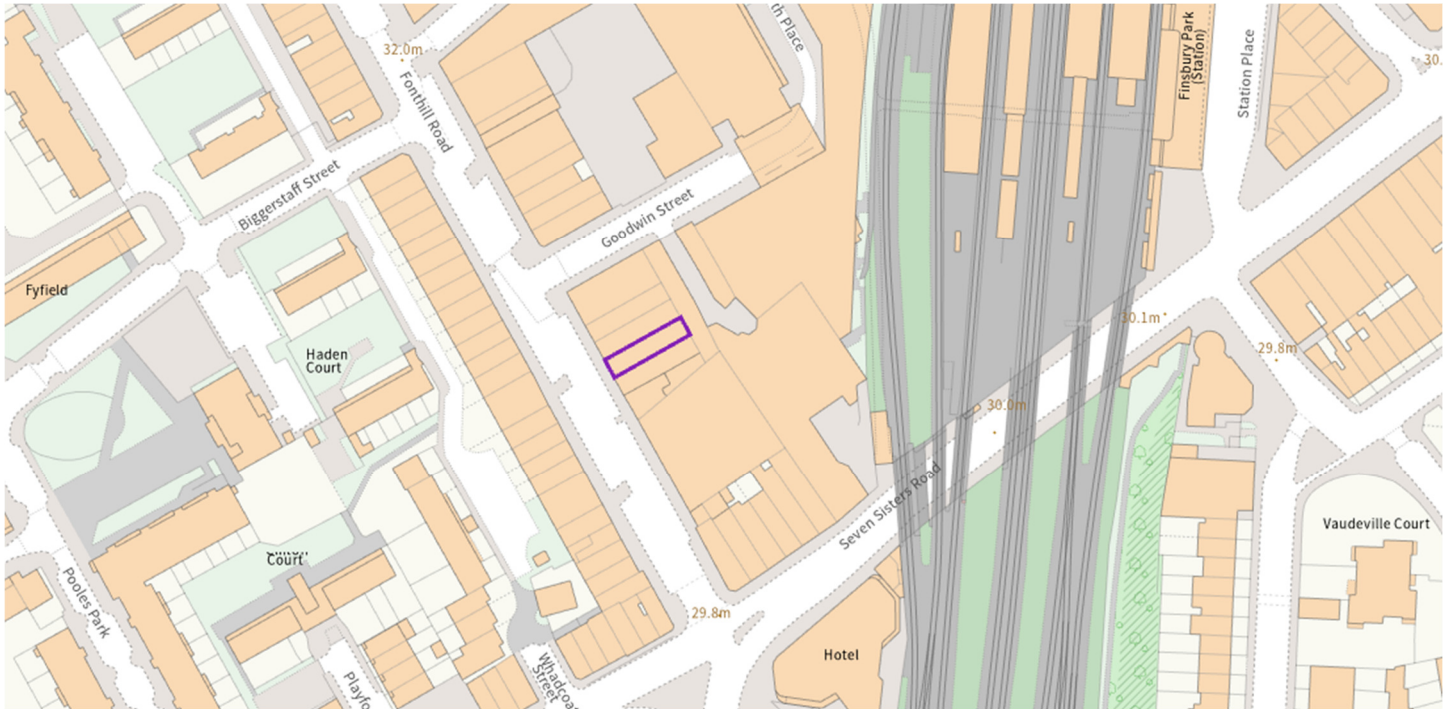


137 Fonthill Road,

Finsbury Park, London Borough of Islington



Source: Searchland

Supporting the High Street through vertical intensification using the Prior Approval route to streamline the process

Vertical intensification on the high street is a planning strategy that involves adding floors, more residential, commercial, or mixed-use space above existing low-rise retail buildings. This approach increases density in town centres, improving housing supply, and revitalises traditional shopping areas by creating a more active and efficient urban fabric. Fonthill Road in Finsbury Park, London, is best known as a fashion and clothing wholesale hub with a distinct, bustling, and multicultural character, as with many High Streets however, it is struggling.

Prior approval is a "light-touch" planning process allowing specific Permitted Development (PD) rights, such as upward extensions or office-to-residential changes, without all the requirements of a full planning application. The regulations are set out under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (GPDO).

We used a phased approach to support our client, initially securing for the change of use of the first floor to residential under Class G of the GPDO. The Prior Approval application was linked with a minor planning application covering minor external changes.

Following the Class G approval, we progressed a further Prior Approval application under Class AB for an upward extension of two additional storeys, delivering two high-quality residential units.

The proposals increased the building from two to four storeys, bringing it into line with the prevailing height of neighbouring properties along the high street. Planning Potential led the planning strategy, prepared the Class AB Statement and coordinated specialist assessments to demonstrate compliance with the relevant criteria, navigating a tricky daylight/sunlight position. The application was approved under delegated powers, subject to conditions.

The phased use of permitted development rights enabled the efficient delivery of new homes in a highly sustainable location, making effective use of underutilised upper floors and roof space while aligning with national planning objectives.

Summary of Achievements

- Strategic advice on phased use of permitted development rights
- Coordination of specialist technical assessments and preparation of supporting statements
- Liaison with London Borough of Islington through to determination

Planning Potential Ltd

London

Magdalen House
148 Tooley Street
London SE1 2TU
T: 020 7397 5212