

London Borough of Camden
Planning Department
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5 Pancras Square
London
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31st October 2023
stuart@rackhamplanning.co.uk
BY EMAIL ONLY

Dear Sir/Madam

Town and Country Planning Act 1990

Application for planning permission for additional cycle parking at 24-28 Bloomsbury Way, London WC1A 2SN

Rackham Planning are instructed by Runway East ("the Applicant") to submit an application for planning permission for installation of additional cycle storage at 24-28 Bloomsbury Way, London WC1A 2SN ("the Application Site" / "the Site").

The proposed 40 no vertical cycle racks will be located within a passageway adjacent to the lower ground office space along the south-western edge of the application site and will supplement the existing cycle storage internally within the lower ground floor. There is no change to the existing use of the building which remains within a lawful Class E use as an office.

The building is occupied by Runway East, a serviced office provider established in 2014. The company currently operates nine serviced co-working office buildings across the UK, including six in London. The building is currently undergoing a sustainably focused internal re-fit and this application proposal will help to facilitate the enhancement of the building in order to deliver 45,000 sqft of flexible and attractive office space to suit modern businesses.

Site and Surroundings

The site is part of a block that is located immediately to the north of the junction between the A40 Bloomsbury Way and Bury Place, approximately 30m south-west of Bloomsbury Square Garden, and 80m south-east of the British Museum. Great Russell Street runs to the north of the block.

The surrounding area has a distinctive gridded street pattern of containing small blocks of development with prevailing scales of 4-6 storeys. The area was first comprehensively re-developed in the late 17th Century with many of the terraces being rebuilt and re-fronted during the mid-19th Century, adding variety to elevational treatments along the streets. The wider area contains a range of uses including residential, business, and culture and entertainment, with the British Museum and Nicholas St George's Church being among the most significant and prominent buildings.

The building subject to this application is four storeys in scale, with additional floorspace accommodated at lower ground / basement level and within a mansard roof. The ground floor façade is finished in stone, with the upper floors faced in red brick, with stone detailing.

The frontage to Bloomsbury Way is approximately 30m in width and the building extends back some 45m within the plot. It adjoins Charlton House (23 Bloomsbury Way)/5 Bloomsbury Garden Square to the north-east, and 29 Bloomsbury Way (occupied by Richer Sounds) to the south-east, with Russell Chambers, a Mansion style block, also adjoining to the east and fronting Bury Place.

According to the Local Plan Policies Map, the site is within the following designated areas:

- Bloomsbury Conservation Area;
- Central London Area (CLA); and
- Archaeological Priority Area (2017).

However, there are no other relevant designations covering the site and the site is not covered by a Neighbourhood Plan Area or Forum.

According to the Historic England Map, the adjacent Charlton House (23 Bloomsbury Way)/5 Bloomsbury Garden Square and the railings are Grade II Listed, with 6 Bloomsbury Garden Square together with the railings and lamp holder being Grade II* Listed.

Other Listed Buildings in the immediate surrounds of the site include, the White Hall Hotel (9-11 Bloomsbury Garden Square (Grade II), 14 Bloomsbury Garden Square (Grade II), the Royal Pharmaceutical Society buildings at 16-17 Bloomsbury Garden Square (Grade II), 66-71 Great Russell Street (Grade II). In addition, 20-21 Bloomsbury Way, diagonally opposite the site frontage to the south-east is also Grade II Listed.

Bloomsbury Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy (Adopted 18 April 2011) confirms that the application site/subject building is a 'positive building' in the context of Sub Area 7 (Museum Street/Great Russell Street) of the Conservation Area. The remainder of the buildings within the development bloc, including those immediately to the south-east along Bury Place are also deemed to be positive buildings.

Planning History

The recent Planning history of the site is summarised in the table below, sourced from the Council's online records. All previous proposals that have been determined were progressed prior to the current applicant having an interest in the building. The most recent application (ref: 2023/3777/NEW) submitted in September 2023 by the applicant is awaiting formal registration and determination at the time of submission of this application.

However, there are no applications relevant to the current proposal.

Reference	Proposal	Decision	Date
2023/3777/NEW	Application for Installation of Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC) equipment	Awaiting Determination	-
2017/6518/P	Installation of 3 x air conditioning units at lower ground floor within the partially enclosed passage.	Granted	Feb 26 2018

2012/3397/P	Installation of a condenser unit on south-west elevation at lower ground floor level of office building (Class B1)	Granted	Oct 2 2012
2012/2076/P	Erection of a roof extension and terrace at fourth floor level of office building (Class B1).	Withdrawn	Jun 29 2012
2012/0790/P	Variation of condition 3 (development built in accordance with approved plans) of planning permission ref 2011/1243/P dated 23/05/2011 for the installation of roof level plant within acoustic enclosure and replacement of all windows from aluminium to crittal framed double glazed windows of offices (Class B1a), namely for the installation of a condenser on the south-west elevation at lower ground floor level.	Withdrawn	Jun 15 2012
2011/1243/P	Installation of roof level plant within acoustic enclosure and replacement of all windows from aluminium to crittal framed double glazed windows of offices (Class B1a)	Granted	May 23 2011

Application Proposal

As noted above, in order to enhance the wider internal refurbishment of the office building by Runway East, additional cycle storage is proposed. Currently there is storage for 20no. cycles within a room accessed via a set of double doors in the lower ground floor, as shown in the floorplan extract in **image 1** and photograph at **image 2**. The proposed is to supplement this internal storage with additional secure cycle parking as well as increasing the total proposed storage to 60no. spaces. The cycle parking will be for use by those using the office space and not members of the public.

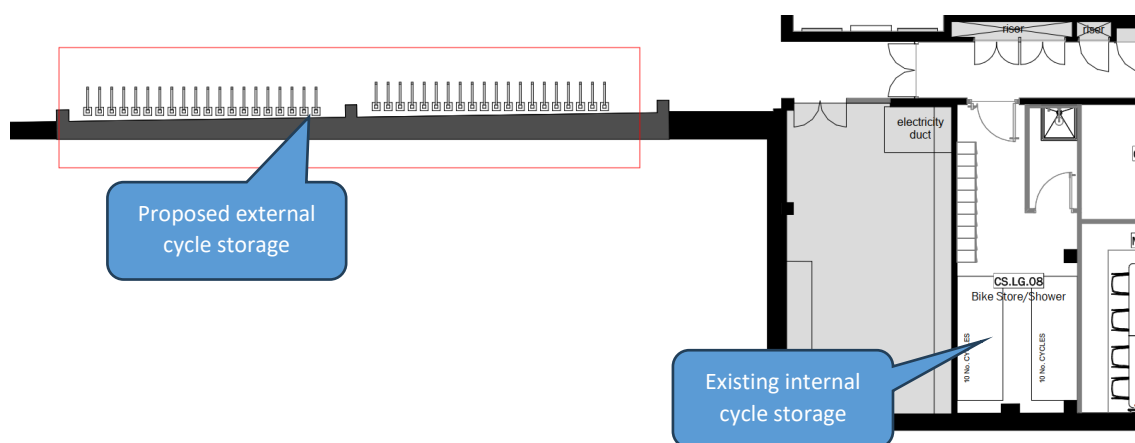


Image 1 – extract from Lower Ground Floor Plan showing existing location of cycle storage being replaced

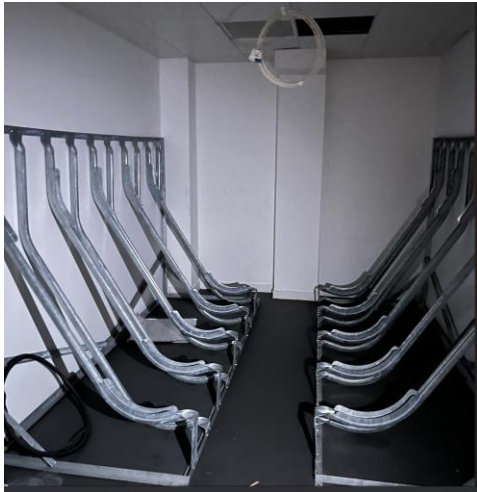


Image 2 – Photograph of existing cycle storage

The application is supported by the following documents:

- Application forms and certificates;
- Site Location Plan (drg ref: B1927/106.P00);
- Existing Floorplan (drg ref: B1927/102.P00);
- Proposed Floorplan (drg ref: B1927/101.P00); and
- Premium Solo Vertical Bike Rack – Information Sheet.

The drawings prepared by Interaction show that the racks will be configured in two rows along the south-western wall of the external passageway. The enclosed manufacturers specifications for the racks (Premium Solo Vertical Bike Rack by *The Bike Storage Company*) confirm that the vertical arrangement is designed where space is required to be used as efficiently as possible. The racks are to be installed against the existing wall, as shown in **image 3**.



Image 3 – Photograph of Proposed cycle storage

Planning Policy and Assessment

The proposals are small scale and limited to an existing lightwell to the south-west of the lower ground floor of the building. As a result, there is no visual impact from public vantage points. Given that the proposed storage supplements existing storage there will not be any adverse impact on residential amenity for those flats served by windows located on the upper floors of the properties in Russell Chambers to the south of the site that have light provided to them via this existing lightwell.

For this reason there is no conflict with paragraph 6.1 of the Local Plan (2017) and **policy A1** (Managing the Impact of Development) which seeks to protect amenity in mixed use areas across the Borough within the wider City.

Local Plan (2017) paragraph 10.8 stresses the aim to promote sustainable transport choices, and states that *“development should prioritise the needs of pedestrians and cyclists and ensure that sustainable transport will be the primary means of travel to and from the site.”* The subsequent paragraph notes that travel by bicycle increased by 82% between 2006 and the adoption of the Local Plan, and that the Council aims to build on this by improving infrastructure for this sustainable transport mode.

Policy T1 (prioritising walking, cycling and public transport) formalizes that aim. Parts (g) to (k) focus on cycling, with part (h) stating the requirement *“for accessible, secure cycle parking facilities exceeding minimum standards outlined within the London Plan (Table 6.3)”* and also requiring that proposals adhere to the design requirements within the Planning Guidance on Transport SPG.

Part (i) of T1, requires that developments make *“provision for high quality facilities that promote cycle usage including changing rooms, showers, dryers and lockers.”*

The London Plan (2021) **Policy T5** (Cycling) states under Part A that *“development Plans and development proposals should help remove barriers to cycling and create a healthy environment in which people choose to cycle.”* One of the measures set out to achieve this is securing appropriate levels of cycle parking provision that is fit for purpose, secure and well-located, and referring to the minimum standards set out under Table 10.2 and Figure 10.3 which confirms that Camden is one of the central boroughs where higher standards apply. For Offices, within these boroughs 1.no long stay space per 75sqm is required and 1.no short stay space per 500sqm for the first 5,000 sqm, with 1.no space per 5,000 thereafter.

Given that the building currently provides approximately 4,180sqm, the overall requirement would be 56.no long stay spaces and 8.no short stay spaces (a total requirement of 64).

Given that this proposal supplements existing cycle parking (which is significantly underprovided at 10no. spaces), the provision of 40no. additional secure cycle storage spaces together with the existing 20.no cycle spaces within the lower ground floor of the building, take the overall provision to 60.no spaces, which is considered to meet the aims of both local and London-wide policy and is therefore considered acceptable. In addition, the internal area also provides space for equipment storage and shower facilities.

On this basis, the proposal is considered to meet the relevant planning requirements, while also facilitating the wider refurbishment of the building and improvement of office stock. The provision of

the additional secure cycle storage accords with key Development Plan policies T1 and T5. Given this compliance with the Development Plan, and on the basis of Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Act 2004, developments that accord with the Development Plan should be granted planning permission.

If you wish to discuss any issues raised herein, please do not hesitate to contact Stuart Rackham (07841 674794/ stuart@rackhamplanning.co.uk).

Yours faithfully



Rackham Planning Limited

Enc. As Above

CC: Runway East; Interaction