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Contact: Daren Zuk
Direct line: 020 7974 3386
Email: Daren.Zuk@camden.gov.uk

Planning Solutions Team
Planning and Regeneration
 Culture & Environment
 Directorate
 London Borough of Camden
 2nd Floor
 5 Pancras Square
 London
 N1C 4AG

Lichfields
 The Minster Building
 21 Mincing Lane
 London
 EC3R 7AG

www.camden.gov.uk/planning

Dear Rosie Williams,

Re: The Blue Lion Public House, 133 Gray's Inn Road, WC1X 8TZ

Thank you for submitting a pre-planning application enquiry for the above property. The required fee of £4,264.69 was received on 23/10/2023. A pre-application meeting was held on 09/11/2023.

1. **Proposal**

Partial change of use from public house (Sui Generis) and ancillary accommodation to pub (Sui Generis) and residential (Class C3) involving the creation of four self-contained residential units. Erection of a four-storey rear extension (1st – 4th floors) and the creation of rear terraces at 1st – 4th floors.

2. **Site Description**

The application site is located to the west side of Gray's Inn Road, fronting both Gray's Inn Road and Brownlow Mews. The site building comprises four storeys with a basement. The site is in use as a public house (Sui Generis) at basement, ground, and part of the first floor. Ancillary accommodation associated with the public house is located on first floor and above. The subject building while not listed is highlighted as a positive contributor within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area.

3. **Relevant Planning History**

12703 – Redevelopment of the site of the Blue Lion Pubic House, 131-133 Gray's Inn Road, WC1 by the erection of a building comprising sub-basement, basement, and ground and four floors over for use as a pubic house with officers and self-contained flats. **Refused 11/05/1972**

Reason for refusal: The proposal is contrary to this Council's policy of restricting growth in office floorspace in the central area as expressed in the written statement of the initial development plan.

2022/3534/P – Partial change of use from pub (Sui Generis) and ancillary accommodation to pub (Sui Generis) and residential (C3) involving the creation of 7 residential units. Erection of three storey rear extension at 1st-3rd floor and two storey roof extension. Erection of rear terraces at 1st-5th floor and ground floor fenestration alterations. **Refused 24/11/2022**

Reasons for refusal included loss of public house ancillary accommodation, storage space, and outside amenity space; poor design and loss of historic architectural features; failure to demonstrate retention and improvement of existing building; amenity impacts to neighbouring and future occupiers; absence of a daylight/sunlight assessment; absence of a basement impact assessment; absence of relevant s.106 legal agreements; and others.

4. Relevant Policies and Guidance

The National Planning Policy Framework 2023

The London Plan 2021

Camden Local Plan 2017

- G1 Delivery and location of growth
- H1 Maximising housing supply
- H2 Maximising the supply of self-contained housing from mixed-use schemes
- H4 Maximising the supply of affordable housing
- H6 Housing choice and mix
- H7 Large and small homes
- C1 Health and wellbeing
- C4 Public Houses
- C5 Safety and security
- C6 Access for all
- A1 Managing the impact of development
- A4 Noise and vibration
- D1 Design
- D2 Heritage
- CC1 Climate change mitigation
- CC2 Adapting to climate change
- CC3 Water and flooding
- CC4 Air Quality
- CC5 Waste
- T1 Prioritising walking, cycling and public transport
- T2 Parking and car-free development
- T3 Transport infrastructure
- T4 Sustainable movement of goods and materials

Camden Planning Guidance

- CPG Developer contributions (2019)
- CPG Access for all (2019)
- CPG Air Quality (2021)
- CPG Amenity (2021)
- CPG Community uses, leisure facilities and pubs (2021)
- CPG Design (2021)
- CPG Energy efficiency and adaptation (2021)
- CPG Housing (2021)
- CPG Transport (2021)
- CPG Water and flooding (2021)

Bloomsbury Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy (2011)

5. Assessment

The planning considerations material to the determination of this application are as follows:

- Land Use
- Dwelling Mix
- Affordable Housing
- Standard of Accommodation
- Design and Conservation
- Amenity
- Sustainability
- Air Quality
- Transport
- Refuse and Recycling
- Planning Obligations/CIL

6. Land Use

The current proposal includes the partial change of use of the building from public house (Sui Generis) to residential (Class C3).

Loss of public house (Sui Generis) floorspace

Policy C4 of the Local Plan seeks to protect public houses which are of community, heritage or townscape value. It states that “applications involving the loss of pub floorspace, including facilities ancillary to the operation of the public house, will be resisted where this will adversely affect the operation of the public house.” This is further reinforced in para. 4.83 of the supporting text which states that “the partial loss of a pub and ancillary facilities may be detrimental to its character, community value or future viability”. It goes on to comment that “these changes can lead to a pub becoming less profitable and as a consequence, more vulnerable to further redevelopment, potentially leading to a pub being lost altogether”. The harmful impact of the introduction of non-ancillary uses is also recognised: “In some cases the loss of part of a pub may lead to its continuing operation being undermined by the greater likelihood of complaints relating to noise and nuisance from occupants of new non-ancillary uses”.

The previously refused application proposed a significant loss of pub floorspace, principally to the ancillary storage and accommodation spaces, which formed one of the reasons for refusal. The current proposal retains the basement as ancillary use to the pub, with the relocated kitchen alongside customer toilets and bar storage. At ground floor level, a small portion of the pub will be converted into the residential entrance hall, cycle store, lift, stair core, and refuse/recycling store.

The refurbishment of the basement and ground floor levels have been sensitively designed to ensure that the operation of the pub is optimised, retaining the maximum amount of pub floorspace while balancing the requirements of a residential scheme on the upper levels. This means the key facilities which contribute to the successful operation of the public house have been retained and refurbished as part of the development and coupled with the limited amount of pub floorspace (69sqm) lost, the proposed change of use is considered acceptable.

Creation of new residential (Class C3) floorspace

Self-contained housing is regarded as the priority land use of the Camden Local Plan. Policy H1 states that the Council will make housing its top priority when considering the future of underused land and buildings. Policy H2 requires 50% of any addition to floorspace to be residential in Central London.

The proposals involve the creation of four self-contained residential (Class C3) units, replacing the existing ancillary residential accommodation which is in poor quality and in need of refurbishment. Although housing is the Council's priority land use, any application that proposes self-contained residential accommodation adjacent to a public house will need to demonstrate that there will be no impact on the amenity of future occupiers of the flats, and that mitigation measures would be adopted to ensure the success of these uses, in line with Policy D13 of the London Plan. Such demonstrable measures include the use of double-glazed windows and alternative means of ventilation without the requirement to open windows, and sound insulation.

Pending the inclusion of mitigation measures outlined above, it is considered that additional residential units can be successfully provided at the site without any associated adverse impacts to the operation of the pub or surrounding uses. Further, the 176sqm of additional residential (Class C3) floorspace does not exceed the floorspace threshold set out in Policy H2.

7. Dwelling Mix

The Council requires development to contribute to the creation of mixed and inclusive communities by containing a mix of large and small homes. Policy H7 of the Local Plan includes a Dwelling Size Priorities Table as set out below:

	<i>1-bedroom (or studio)</i>	<i>2-bedroom</i>	<i>3-bedroom</i>	<i>4-bedroom</i>
Social-affordable rented	Low	High	High	Medium
Intermediate affordable	High	Medium	Low	Low
Market	Low	High	High	Low

Policy H7 seeks to ensure that all housing development:

- a. contributes to meeting the priorities set out in the Dwelling Size Priorities Table; and
- b. includes a mix of large and small homes.

The proposal includes the creation of 2x self-contained one-bedroom flats, 1x self-contained two-bedroom flat, and 1x self-contained three-bedroom flat. The one-bedroom flat is regarded as a low priority, while the two- and three-bedroom flats are regarded as a high priority. On balance, the proposed unit mix is considered acceptable, meeting the needs identified in the table above.

8. Affordable Housing

Policy H4 requires a contribution to affordable housing from all developments that provide one or more additional homes and involve a total addition to residential floorspace of 100sqm GIA or more. The policy states that where developments have a capacity for fewer than 10 additional dwellings, the Council will accept a payment in lieu of affordable housing.

Targets are based on an assessment of development capacity whereby 100sqm GIA of housing floorspace is generally considered to create capacity for one home and a sliding scale target applied to developments that provide one or more additional homes and have capacity for fewer than 25 additional homes, starting at 2% for one home and increasing by 2% for each additional home added to capacity.

Where development has the capacity for fewer than 10 additional dwellings, the Council will accept a payment-in-lieu of affordable housing. A rate of £5000 per sqm GIA is applied. On this basis of an uplift of 241sqm residential floorspace, the contribution would be £48,200:

*Additional residential floorspace [(241 sqm GIA) x target% (capacity for 2 additional homes = 4%)] x £5000 = **£48,200***

9. Standard of Accommodation

Policy H6 outlines how the Council will seek to secure high quality accessible homes in all developments that include housing. We will:

- a. Encourage design of all housing to provide functional, adaptable, and accessible spaces;
- b. Expect all self-contained homes to meet the nationally described space standard;
- c. Require 90% of new-build self-contained homes in each development to be accessible and adaptable in accordance with Building Regulation M4(2); and
- d. Require 10% of new-build self-contained homes in each development to be suitable for occupation by a wheelchair user or easily adapted for occupation by a wheelchair user in accordance with Building Regulation M4(3).

The proposed one-bedroom units, located on the first floor, have a GIA of 50-55sqm which meets the minimum GIA for a one-bedroom, two-person flat. The two-bedroom unit, located on the second floor, has a GIA of 88sqm which meets the minimum GIA for a two-bedroom, four-person flat. The three-bedroom flat, located on the third and fourth floors, has a GIA of 114sqm which meets the minimum GIA for a three-bedroom, six-person flat located on two levels.

The one-bedroom units on the first floor are each single aspect, with Flat 1 facing west and Flat 2 facing east. Flats 3 and 4 are both dual aspect, facing east and west. It is considered each unit would receive sufficient daylight/sunlight throughout the year.

Units 1, 3, and 4 each feature large private roof terraces, facing west. Although Flat 2 does not feature private outdoor amenity space, it is considered the additional 5sqm of internal floor area accounts for the lack of outdoor amenity space and is therefore acceptable.

10. Design and Conservation

The Council's design policies are aimed at achieving the highest standard of design in all developments, including where alterations and extensions are proposed. Policy D1 of the Local Plan requires development to be of the highest architectural and urban design quality which improves the function, appearance, and character of the area. The Council welcomes high quality contemporary design which responds to its context. Camden's Local Plan Document is supported by Supplementary Planning Guidance CPG (Design).

Local Plan Policy D2 states that the Council will preserve and, where appropriate, enhance Camden's rich and diverse heritage assets and their settings, including conservation areas. To comply with Policy D2, extensions to properties should integrate with and enhance the host building and not be dominant or obtrusive.

Camden's Design CPG emphasises Camden's commitment to design excellence and expects development schemes to consider:

- The context of a development and its surrounding area;
- The design of the building itself;
- The use and function of buildings;
- Using good quality sustainable materials;
- Creating well connected public spaces and good quality public realm;
- Opportunities for promoting health and well-being; and
- Opportunities for improving the character and quality of an area.

Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 is relevant and requires that special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a Conservation Area when considering applications relating to land or buildings within that Area.

The application site is not listed but located within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area Sub Area 10. The Bloomsbury Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy (2011) describes the character of Sub Area 10 as having a distinct character derived from the smaller scale of the street, the footprint and scale of the mews buildings which are mostly two-storeys in height. The mews buildings often have an elevational treatment reflecting their original use with large ground-floor openings and small openings on upper floors, and building lines immediately behind the street edge.

Specifically when discussing Brownlow Mews, the statement notes that unlike many other mews, the original cobbles survive and that 'whilst pressure for change has led to many of the original mews buildings being replaced, Doughty Mews and the northern end of Brownlow Mews arguably contain the best surviving examples of original mews buildings although many have been altered'.

The Blue Lion is described as making a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, and as being a 'shopfront of merit'. The Gray's Inn Road frontage features a steeply pitched pan tiled roof, which gives period character and a strong roofline/profile. On the single-storey Brownlow Mews frontage, it has a line following the footprint of the neighbouring mews buildings, forming part of the distinctive character of the mews described above. It is this character, scale, footprint and architectural detailing that makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of this part of the Conservation Area.

The proposal will erect a four-storey rear extension from first to fourth floors, which includes a small roof extension at fourth (roof) floor level. The rear extension has been carefully designed to address concerns outlined in the previous reasons for refusal, including reducing the bulk and mass at the rear, retention of the existing roof form at the front, and sensitive alterations to the Brownlow Mews elevation.

It is considered that the current proposal is acceptable in terms of its mass, height, and bulk. Although the rear extension adds considerable depth to the rear of the building, it is considered the relatively shallow depth of the first floors and above, and the fact that neighbouring buildings are considerably deeper, that there is precedent for the building to be extended to the rear. The extension does not appear over dominant and is sensitively incorporated into the existing building, nominally projecting past the existing rear face of the building to the south while incorporating a stepped and set back form. This massing retains the sensitive Brownlow Mews elevation and relationship the mews as a whole and allows for generous terraces for three of the four proposed flats.

The proposed architecture has been designed to incorporate elements of the host building, while referencing neighbouring mews buildings. Although the detailing of the fenestration has not been confirmed, the use of industrial style windows and matching brick is considered acceptable for use within the context of the mews. The proposed design will positively contribute to the character and setting of the mews within the wider Conservation Area. Further details of the windows, external doors, facade material, and balustrades should accompany any future application.

The joyful and architecturally unique Brownlow Mews elevation has been preserved, with minimal interventions to allow for a residential bin store which will swap out two existing small windows for external access doors. This is considered acceptable and will preserve the character of the building and the wider Conservation Area and retain the attractive joinery and fenestration. The new external door to access the bin store should be designed sensitively, taking cues from historic doors along the mews.

Any future application should confirm the relocation of the existing pub plant and extract facilities, as well as the location any plant facilities for the new residential units. Siting of such plant facilities should be in sensitive locations and screened from public views.

It is noted that no alterations are proposed to the front facade.

Overall, it is considered that the current proposal satisfactorily addresses the previous reasons for refusal including height, bulk, and detailed design. The extension as proposed is considered sympathetic to the host building and would help preserve the unique character of this part of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area and Brownlow Mews.

11. Amenity

Local Plan Policy A1 seeks to protect the amenity of Camden's residents by ensuring the impact of development is fully considered. It seeks to ensure that development protects the quality of life of occupiers and neighbours by only granting permission for redevelopment that would not harm the amenity of neighbouring residents. This includes privacy, outlook, daylight, sunlight and noise. CPG (Amenity) provides specific guidance with regards to privacy and outlook.

During the course of the previous application, concerns were raised by neighbouring residential occupiers that the proposed development would result in impacts to privacy and noise. Further concerns were also raised that the bulk of the extension would negatively affect daylight/sunlight to properties along the west side of Brownlow Mews.

The current proposal, which features a significantly reduced bulk and mass, a stepped profile, and increased separation distances satisfactorily addresses these concerns. The reduced mass and siting of the proposed extension is not considered to create any negative effects to neighbouring amenity with regards to loss of daylight/sunlight, nor would the proposed separation distances from the residential terraces and existing residential properties create any nuisance with noise or loss of privacy from overlooking.

Any future application should confirm the relocation of the existing pub plant and extract facilities, as well as the location any plant facilities for the new residential units. Siting of such plant facilities should be in sensitive locations and screened from public views. A noise impact assessment is required to be submitted along with any future application to ensure that emitted noise levels do not affect the amenity of neighbouring occupiers.

Overall, it is considered that the proposed development, pending the submission of a satisfactory noise impact assessment, would not have any negative impacts on the amenity of any neighbouring residential occupier with regards to loss of daylight/sunlight, sense of enclosure, or overlooking/loss of privacy.

12. Sustainability

Local Plan policy CC1 requires all developments to make the fullest contribution to the mitigation of and adaptation to climate change, to minimise carbon dioxide emissions and contribute to water conservation and sustainable urban drainage. Policy CC2 requires all development to adopt appropriate climate change adaptation measures. Policy CC3 is also relevant with regards to sustainability and climate change.

Policy CC1 part e) states we will require all proposals that involve substantial demolition to demonstrate that it is not possible to retain and improve the existing building. The supporting text further adds that demolition should be fully justified in terms of the optimisation of resources and energy use, in comparison with the existing building. Any future application should demonstrate and rationalise the level of demolition required to accommodate the proposed works and retain as much of the original building as possible.

A sustainability and energy statement should be provided with any future application, outlining any reduction in carbon emissions below Part L 2013 building regulations. Such improvements to the energy efficiency of the site could include the use of air source heat pumps, PV solar panels, wastewater heat recovery systems, and flue gas heat recovery systems.

Developments must be designed to be water efficient. This can be achieved through the installation of water efficient fittings and appliances (which can help reduce energy consumption as well as water consumption) and by capturing and re-using rainwater and grey water on-site.

13. Air Quality

The application site is in an area of poor air quality. Local Plan policy CC4 and CPG Air Quality are relevant with regards to air quality. Any future application would require the submission of an air quality assessment.

14. Transport

The subject site has a PTAL score of 6b which indicates that it has an excellent level of accessibility by public transport. The nearest underground station is Great Portland Street, located to the north of the site.

In line with Policy T1 of the Local Plan, the Council expects cycle parking at developments to be provided in accordance with the standards set out in the London Plan. The London Plan requires 1 space for a 1 bed/studio, 1.5 spaces for a 2bed, and 2 spaces for all other dwellings for long stay – resulting in a total residential requirement of 7 spaces. The submitted plans show the provision of a cycle store at ground floor level within the residential lobby for 8 cycles, which is considered acceptable and would be secured by condition.

In terms of the pub use it would expect 1 space per 175sqm for long stay and 1 space per 20sqm for short stay. It is acknowledged that there are currently no existing cycle parking spaces on site for the existing pub and ancillary pub accommodation. As the development is for a partial change of use, which involves mainly converting the ancillary accommodation to

flats and retaining the pub at ground and basement level, highways officers in this instance have considered that the cycle parking requirement for the commercial space would not be sought given the above.

In accordance with Policy T2 of the Local Plan, which seeks car free development across the Borough, both of the new residential units should be secured as on-street residents parking permit (car) free by means of the S.106 Legal Agreement. This will prevent the future occupants from adding to existing on-street parking pressures, traffic congestion and air pollution, whilst encouraging the use of more sustainable modes of transport such as walking, cycling, and public transport.

Given the location of the site in the Central London area and the limited means of access to the site, it is recommended that the development be subject to a Construction Management Plan and associated Implementation Support Contribution of £4,194 and Impact Bond of £8,000 to be secured by means of a S.106 Legal Agreement. This will help ensure that the proposed development is carried out without unduly impacting the operation of the local highway network or neighbouring amenity, in line with policy A1 of the Local Plan.

The public highway in the general vicinity of the site is likely to sustain damage as a direct result of the construction activities. A highways contribution would therefore be required; the amount to be confirmed upon submission of a formal application and secured by means of a section 106 legal agreement. This would allow the Council to repair any damage to the public highway in the general vicinity of the site on completion of the development.

The development would introduce new trips to the area and the Council aims to encourage walking and cycling as the primary mode of transport for short journeys. With the lack of existing cycle parking facilities and to support local Pedestrian, Cycling and Environmental (PCE) schemes (e.g. upgrades to the existing cycle lanes), the Council would therefore seek to secure a financial contribution of £15,000 as a s106 obligation.

15. Refuse and Recycling

You are advised to design in adequate facilities for recycling and the storage and disposal of waste. Further information can be found in CPG Sustainability. Camden Local Plan Policy CC5 (Waste) and CPG (Design) are relevant with regards to waste and recycling storage and seek to ensure that appropriate storage for waste and recyclables are provided in all developments. Any proposal should demonstrate that the development would include facilities for the storage and collection of waste and recycling, including utilising existing facilities.

16. Planning Obligations/CIL

The following S.106 planning obligations may be required if planning permission were granted:

- Affordable Housing Contribution £48,200
- Car-free development for all four flats
- Construction Management Plan and Implementation Support Contribution £4,194
- Impact Bond £8,000
- Highways Contribution
- Pedestrian, cycling and environmental improvements contribution £15,000

17. Conclusion

The proposed change of use, provision of four self-contained flats, and associated works are considered acceptable in land use, design, and heritage terms. The extension is considered sympathetic to the unique character of the host building and wider Conservation Area. It is considered that pending submission of detailed design and materiality of the rear extension, the proposal as presented would be supportable.

18. Planning Application Information

Should you choose to submit a planning application, I would advise you to submit the following for a valid planning application:

- Completed application form
- An ordnance survey-based location plan at 1:1250 scale denoting the site in red
- Floor plans at a scale of 1:50 labelled 'existing' and 'proposed'
- Roof plans at a scale of 1:50 labelled 'existing' and 'proposed'
- Elevation drawings at a scale of 1:50 labelled 'existing' and 'proposed'
- Section drawings at a scale of 1:50 labelled 'existing' and 'proposed'
- Demolition Plans
- Planning Statement
- Design and Access Statement
- Heritage Statement
- Noise Impact Assessment
- Sustainability and Energy Statement
- Air Quality Assessment
- The appropriate fee
- Please see [supporting information for planning applications](#) for more information

We are legally required to consult on applications with individuals who may be affected by the proposals. We would put up a notice on or near the site and advertise in a local newspaper. The Council must allow 21 days from the consultation start date for responses to be received. You are advised to contact your neighbours to discuss the proposals.

This document represents an initial informal officer view of your proposals based on the information available to us at this stage and would not be binding upon the Council, nor prejudice any future planning application decisions made by the Council.

If you have any queries about the above letter or the attached document, please do not hesitate to contact Daren Zuk on **020 7974 3386**.

Thank you for using Camden's pre-application advice service.

Yours sincerely,

Daren Zuk

**Senior Planning Officer
Planning Solutions Team**