

<b>Delegated Report</b>		<b>Analysis sheet</b>		<b>Expiry Date:</b>		11/11/2024	
		N/A / attached		<b>Consultation Expiry Date:</b>		24/11/2024	
<b>Officer</b>				<b>Application Number(s)</b>			
Henry Yeung				2024/3948/P			
<b>Application Address</b>				<b>Drawing Numbers</b>			
County Hotel Upper Woburn Place London WC1H 0JW				Refer to draft decision notice			
<b>PO 3/4</b>		<b>Area Team Signature</b>		<b>C&amp;UD</b>		<b>Authorised Officer Signature</b>	
<b>Proposal(s)</b>							
Retention of the existing air source heat pumps and kitchen extract plant, and the erection of acoustic screening on the electrical substation and kitchen roofs to replace the existing louvred screens							
<b>Recommendation(s):</b>		Refused and Warning of Enforcement Action to be Taken					
<b>Application Type:</b>		Full Planning Permission					
<b>Conditions or Reasons for Refusal:</b>		Refer to Draft Decision Notice					
<b>Informatives:</b>							
<b>Consultations</b>							
<b>Adjoining Occupiers:</b>		No. notified	<b>00</b>	No. of responses	<b>00</b>	No. of objections	<b>00</b>
<b>Summary of consultation responses:</b>		A site notice was displayed from 25/10/2024 to 19/10/2024. A press notice was displayed from 31/10/2024 to 24/11/2024.  No responses were received.					
<b>Bloomsbury CAAC</b>		No response was received.					

## Site Description

The County Hotel by C Lovett Gill was opened in 1940 and is eight-storeys in height, with a flat roof and a setback roof enclosure. The building is a hotel but has a separate unit on the ground floor which has been used historically as a cafe.

The site is located within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area within sub area 6 and is identified in the Conservation Area Appraisal as a positive contributor to the conservation area. It is adjacent to the Grade II Listed British Medical Association House which lies to the south. Diagonally opposite to the west, lies Cora Hotel (now known as Euston Plaza Hotel) which is Grade II Listed, and to the rear of County Hotel to the north-east there is a Grade II\* Listed terrace, Nos 4-18 Woburn Walk.

## Relevant History

**2024/3818/A** - 1 x internally illuminated fascia sign, and 3 x flagpoles and flags at first floor level. – **Granted** 27/09/2024.

**2024/0217/A** - Removal of 2 x non-illuminated fascia signs, 1 x non-illuminated wall mounted sign and 1 x non-illuminated projecting sign to facilitate the provision of 1 x internally illuminated fascia sign, 1 x internally illuminated wall-mounted sign, 2 x internally illuminated projecting signs and 1 x nonilluminated fascia sign. - **Granted** 05/02/2024.

**2023/3680/P** - Erection of a single storey extension, erection of an electrical substation, following the demolition of the existing substation & enclosure installation of new front entrance, removal of a goods lift and enclosure from the front of the building, all on Woburn Walk at ground floor level, replacement of the existing goods platform lift to the front elevation and amendments to the rear terrace (south) at basement level and erection of an open-sided canopy. - **Granted** 13/03/2024.

**2014/4202/A** - Advertisement consent to display 3 x non -illuminated signs. - **Granted** 01/12/2014.

**2024/2349/A** - Display of 1 x internally illuminated fascia sign above window and 1 x internally illuminated sign to front lightwell wall, and 1 x awning and 1 x sign to rear elevation (retrospective). **Refused and Warning of Prosecution Action to be Taken**

## Relevant policies

**National Planning Policy Framework 2024**

**London Plan March 2021**

**Camden Local Plan 2017**

Policy A1 Managing the impact of development

Policy A4 Noise and vibration

Policy D1 Design

Policy D2 Heritage

**Supplementary Guidance**

CPG Energy efficiency and adaptation (2021)

CPG Design (2021)

CPG Amenity (2021)

**Bloomsbury Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy 2011**

### 1. Proposal

1.1 Retrospective planning permission is sought for the retention of four Air-Source Heat Pump (ASHP) units on the flat roof of the substation and the roof-mounted plant on top of the kitchen roof. The proposal involves the replacement of the existing unauthorised screen with a louvred acoustic enclosure to contain the ASHP units, as well as a metalwork screen for the roof-mounted plant on the kitchen. The existing screen is black in colour and this application proposes different materials to replace the existing screening, which include a green living wall and architectural metalwork.

### 2. Assessment

2.1 The main considerations in relation to this proposal are:

- Design and Heritage
- Neighbouring Amenity
- Sustainability

### 3. Design and Heritage

3.1 Policy D1 of the Local Plan requires proposals to consider the character, setting, context and the form and scale of neighbouring buildings, and the character and proportions of the existing building. Through Policy D2, the Council will seek to preserve and, where appropriate, enhance Camden's conservation areas and listed buildings.

3.2 CPG 'Design' states that the Council will only permit development within conservation areas that preserves and where possible enhances the character and appearance of the area. It further explains that when making a balanced judgment having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the asset(s) affected, the Council will take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of any heritage asset/s and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation; the positive contribution that the conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality and health and wellbeing; and the desirability of new development that affects heritage assets to preserve and enhance local character and distinctiveness.

3.3 CPG 'Design' also outlines that all building services equipment must be given the same level of consideration and quality in design as other elements and should not be a dominant feature of the building. Paragraph 9.18 states that plant, machinery, ducting, and any ancillary structures, including screening, must be designed and constructed with materials consistent with the building, ensuring they are not visible from the street, public vantage points, or immediately adjacent buildings.

3.4 Special attention has been paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the Conservation Area and features of special architectural or historic interest of the listed building, under s.72 and s.66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended by the Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013. Although the applicant's site itself is not a listed building, the adjacent neighbour is a Grade II listed building.

3.5 The proposed ASHPs are very large and significantly impact the appearance of the side elevation of the adjacent building along the Grade II\* Listed terrace at Nos. 4–18 Woburn Walk. Additionally, the existing acoustic screen is fully visible within the streetscape of this distinctive historic street. Woburn Walk makes a significant contribution to the character and appearance

of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area and should be preserved or enhanced. The Council acknowledges that the building is a multi-storey hotel, and therefore, ASHPs and extraction equipment may be necessary for the operation. However, in this instance, the proposed development is overly large, prominently located, and highly visible. As a result, the ASHPs significantly disrupt the side elevation, appearing awkwardly adjacent to one of the listed buildings in the local area. This gives the impression of an ad-hoc, incongruous addition that adversely impacts the character of the locally listed building. Furthermore, the units are situated in a prominent position, adding visual clutter at the ground to first-floor level. The enclosures housing the units would be visible from the private views of neighbouring residential properties, further contributing to their intrusive appearance.

3.6 The louvred acoustic enclosure significantly detracts from the side elevation of the adjoining Grade II\* Listed terrace at Nos. 4–18 Woburn Walk. The screening appears as a semi-permanent, ad-hoc structure of low quality, impacting the architectural feature of the listed building, and is therefore unacceptable. The units within the enclosures would be visible from the private views of the neighbouring residential properties, making the AC units more visually prominent from neighbouring gardens.

3.7 In contrast, the extraction plant to the rear is located in an area of low public visibility and does not contribute significantly to the character of the building, making it acceptable. However, the ASHP units would cause demonstrable harm to the character and appearance of the host building and the wider conservation area. The design of the enclosure around them would represent an alien addition to this residential dwelling and is also unacceptable given the bulk and number of units being proposed. The Conservation Officer was consulted and concluded that the ASHP units, in this location and in terms of design and heritage, neither preserve nor enhance the character and appearance of the host property or the wider conservation area. This is not a secondary street where equipment can be installed with full visibility, obstructing views of important heritage assets and detracting from the overall quality of the streetscape. Overall, the proposal fails to comply with Policies D1 (Design) and D2 (Heritage) of the 2017 Local Plan.

3.8 Whilst the proposed ASHP's may provide some public benefits, the Applicant has failed to demonstrate that the proposed location is the least harmful location, and why the units could not be located on the flat kitchen roof or in other less prominent locations. As such, it is not considered that the public benefits would outweigh the harm to designated heritage assets as identified above.

#### **4. Amenity**

4.1 Policies A1 of the Local Plan seek to protect the amenity of Camden's residents by ensuring the impact of development is fully considered and would not harm the amenity of neighbouring residents. This includes privacy, outlook, noise, daylight and sunlight. Policy A4 of the Local Plan seeks to ensure that noise and vibration is controlled and managed.

4.2 An acoustic assessment has been submitted with the application, which addresses the impact of the ASHP units, and the nearest sensitive residential receptors are identified in the acoustic submission as the adjoining neighbour at 4 Woburn Walk. Based on the results of the environmental noise survey, the applicant proposes adequate levels to be achieved at 1 metre from the nearest noise sensitive window.

4.3 The acoustic report has been reviewed by the Council's Environmental Health Officer, and it has been concluded that there would be no adverse impact on neighbouring residents in terms of noise and vibration. Compliance conditions have been included to limit noise and vibration. Because of the scale and siting on the unit, there would be no adverse impacts relating to outlook, daylight or sunlight.

## 5. Sustainability

5.1 Policy CC1 of the Local Plan requires all development to minimise the effects of climate change and to meet the highest feasible environmental standards that are financially viable during construction and occupation. The Council will support and encourage sensitive energy efficiency improvements to existing buildings.

5.2. The proposed ASHP units are supported in principle to provide a more sustainable means of heating at the site. Had the proposal been otherwise acceptable, a condition would have been included limiting the use of the ASHP units to heating only to ensure no active cooling function is in operation.

## 6. Recommendation:

6.1 **Recommendation 1:** Refuse planning permission.

6.2 **Recommendation 2:** That the Borough Solicitor be instructed to issue an Enforcement Notice under Section 172 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended **seeking removal of the unauthorised 4no. Air Source Heat Pump units and acoustic enclosure** and officers be authorised in the event of non-compliance, to commence legal proceedings under Section 179 or other appropriate power and/or take direct action under Section 178 in order to secure the cessation of the breach of planning control.

**The notice shall allege the following breaches of planning control:**

1. Installation of 4 x Air Source Heat Pump units and associated acoustic enclosure on the flat roof of substation.

### **WHAT ARE YOU REQUIRED TO DO:**

1. Completely remove the 4 x Air Source Heat Pump

2. Remove temporary acoustic enclosure.

**PERIOD OF COMPLIANCE: One month**

### **REASONS WHY THE COUNCIL CONSIDER IT EXPEDIENT TO ISSUE THE NOTICE:**

The air source heat pump units and louvre screening, by reason of their size, design and location, result in a dominant, incongruous and disproportionate addition to the roof top, causing harm to the character and appearance of the host building and conservation area and to the setting of the adjacent Grade II\* listed building, contrary to Policy D1 (Design) and D2 (Heritage) of the Camden Local Plan 2017.