

Delegated Report		Analysis sheet	Expiry Date:	10/04/2025
		N/A	Consultation Expiry Date:	23/03/2024
Officer			Application Number(s)	
Matthew Kitchener			2025/0626/P	
Application Address			Drawing Numbers	
17 Rugby Street London WC1N 3QT			See decision notice	
PO 3/4	Area Team Signature	C&UD	Authorised Officer Signature	
Proposal(s)				
Installation of fall arrest edge protection railing to main roof, installation of extract fan flues at front and rear for mechanical heat recovery ventilation and increase profile of timber mullion to shopfront to accommodate new double glazed units.				
Recommendation(s):		Refuse planning permission		
Application Type:		Full Planning Application		

Informatives:				
Consultations				
Adjoining Occupiers:	No. of responses	00	No. of objections	00
Summary of consultation responses:	<p>A site notice was displayed on 21 February 2025 and expired on 17 March 2025.</p> <p>A press notice was published on 27 February 2024, which expired on 23 March 2025.</p> <p>No representations were received from the neighbouring properties during the determination period.</p>			
Other responses:	<p>Bloomsbury CAAC objected to the proposal:</p> <p>The installation of railings at parapet level and flues to the front elevation clearly causes harm to the special character and appearance of the CA. They are both inappropriate features for a historic building and area. The existing facade and those along this street are currently fairly clear of general clutter, and a precedent should not be set for such alterations.</p> <p>Regarding the flues, without internal plans, it is difficult to understand or assess why so many are required in one building. Nevertheless, there are systems available which do not require a specialised two-way flue as seems to be proposed, and could therefore presumably run through less obtrusive airbricks. It is also not understood why these systems are being proposed when the building will still be passively ventilated through trickle vents on the windows, meaning that the heat recovery benefit is fairly limited to the extracts only.</p> <p>Regarding the shopfront, while we have no objection to the installation of double glazing in principle, this is a very sensitive piece of joinery which needs to be altered carefully to maintain its special appearance. While we welcome the attempt to retain the mullions, the submitted detail is not well-considered, and I do not understand why the proposed glazing is so thick at 27mm when standard double-glazed units are approximately 10mm thick and insulated glazing units can be obtained at around 7mm. The currently proposed detail would almost double the width of the mullion which is clearly intended to be quite a slim feature. We are primarily concerned that the execution of this detail is likely to be quite poor and change the appearance of this shopfront quite significantly.</p> <p><i>See section 2 for comment.</i></p>			
Officer's response in italics				

Site Description

17 Rugby Street is a mixed residential and commercial property comprising two flats at first and second floor levels over a basement and ground floor commercial premises.

The building is of solid brickwork construction with a pitched slate covered roof. Windows to the front are timber sliding sashes and to the rear are similarly timber sliding sashes as well as a small timber casement window. There are timber framed single glazed shopfronts with timber glazed doors either side of a central timber panelled communal flat entrance door recessed into a geometric tiled porch area.

It is located within the Bloomsbury conservation area but is not a listed building.

The Bloomsbury Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy notes that “In Rugby Street, later 19th century timber shopfronts have been inserted into ground floor frontages, particularly on the south side, involving the loss of boundary railings and basement areas. Although the original uniformity at street level has been lost, the mixed use character of the shops contributes positively to the character of the sub area. A number of the shops retain their console brackets and other features” Number 17 is noted as a being ‘Positive Contributor’ and a ‘Shopfront of Merit within the conservation area.

Relevant History

17 Rugby Street

None relevant.

3/5 Rugby Street

2023/1775/P - Raising height of flat roof of single storey artist studio and replacement of glazed roof lantern. Installation of safety handrail to roof of main building – **Granted 25/07/2023**. It was considered that owing to the height of the existing parapet the railing would not be visible in public views from street level.

Relevant policies

National Planning Policy Framework 2024

The London Plan 2021

Camden Local Plan 2017

D1 - Design

D2 - Heritage

A1 – Managing the Impact of Development

Camden Planning Guidance

CPG Design (2021)

Bloomsbury Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy 2011

Assessment

1.0. Proposal

- 1.1 Planning permission is sought for the installation of fall arrest edge protection railing to main roof, installation of extract fan flues at front and rear for mechanical heat recovery ventilation and increase profile of timber mullion to shopfront to accommodate new double glazed units.
- 1.2 The main planning considerations for the proposal are:
- Design and Heritage
 - Amenity

2.0 Design and Heritage

- 2.1 Local Plan policy D1 (Design) states that the Council will seek to secure high quality design in development. The Council will require that development that respects local context and character. Policy D2 (Heritage) states that development within conservation areas preserves or, where possible, enhances the character or appearance of the area and preserve garden spaces which contribute to the character and appearance of a conservation area.
- 2.2 The site lies within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area the character and appearance of which the Council has a statutory duty to preserve or enhance. The Bloomsbury Conservation Area Statement identifies No. 17 as an unlisted building that make a positive contribution to the special character and appearance of the conservation area as well as having a shopfront of merit.
- 2.3 No. 17 is an attractive brick-built three-storey plus basement building. It is unaltered at the front with a timber-framed shopfront at ground level. The building has a parapet at the front with a dual-pitch roof set back behind it. It is proposed to install a 1.1m-high black steel railing behind the front parapet, allowing for future maintenance on the roof to be carried out securely. It is also proposed to install an internal heat recovery extract ventilation within the upper floor flats, and in order to do this, it is proposed to install two brown UPVC vent flues to the front elevation at first and second floor, and two to the rear elevation. It is also proposed to alter the mullions to the ground-floor shopfront in order that double-glazed units can be installed. One mullion section to each shopfront will need to be increased in size where two adjacent glazed sections meet to accommodate the increased glazing thickness.
- 2.4 The proposed steel railings above the parapet are detrimental to the character and appearance of the building. It is considered that their presence at the front of the property would cause harm to the historic building which is a positive contributor to the conservation area. Due to the building being three storeys in height the railings would be able to be viewed from the wider streetscene as well as from other buildings in the area. Although it is stated that the railings are proposed in order to allow anyone working on the roof in the future to do so safely there are other non-permanent methods available for working securely at height. It is considered that improved health and safety for private occupiers is not a public benefit to be weighed against harm to the conservation area. It is noted that another property in the street 3/5 Rugby Street recently benefited from planning permission (2023/1775/P) that included railings to the front however it is considered that this current proposal is on a building that is lower in height and the railings would result in more of a negative impact on the appearance and character of the property.

- 2.5 It is proposed to install a single room heat recovery extract ventilation to both flats at first and second floor in the kitchens and bathrooms. No details of the actual system were provided. The kitchens face the front elevation and there will be two fan extract flues terminating to the front elevation (one for each flat) and two to the rear to serve the bathrooms (which are situated to the rear). The flues would project from the external walls by approximately 150mm and would be brown UPVC and 100mm diameter. The front elevation of the building is relatively clear of clutter and it is considered that it would be detrimental to the relatively unspoilt appearance of the building's front elevation to allow the insertion of two UPVC flues. The use of UPVC would be contrary to the high quality material that is expected within a conservation area.
- 2.6 The building has a shopfront of merit as identified in the conservation area assessment. It is currently single glazed with timber mullions and construction. The proposed glazing units would be 24mm thick and this thickness would require the existing mullions either side of the front panes where they join panes that angle in towards the door to be increased in width. This would increase the width of the existing mullions in this location by nearly double. It is considered that this would result in a loss of the streamlined mullion appearance to the detriment of the appearance of the historic shopfront as a whole.
- 2.7 The impact of the proposed railings, flues and shopfront alterations on the positive contribution which the host building makes to the character and appearance of the conservation area is considered to be deleterious, i.e. fails to preserve or enhance. This is down to the siting of the railings and flues on the relatively unspoilt front elevation and the loss of the existing slimline mullion appearance on the shopfront. These works would be clearly identifiable in views from the conservation area and would therefore result in detriment being caused to the character and appearance of the host building and the conservation area. The proposal is contrary to policies D1 and D2 of the Camden Local Plan 2017.
- 2.8 Considerable importance and weight have been attached to the harm and special attention has been paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance conservation area, under the Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act 1990 as amended by the Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013.

3. Amenity

- 3.1 Policy A1 aims to protect the quality of life of occupiers and neighbours. This includes such factors as visual privacy, outlook, sunlight, daylight, overshadowing and artificial light levels. It is considered that the proposal would not result in detriment to the amenities of neighbouring occupiers due to overlooking, privacy, loss of light and overshadowing and complies with policy A1 of the Camden Local Plan.

4. Recommendation

- 4.1 Refuse Planning Permission for the following reason:

1. The proposal by reason of its siting, design and materials would harm the character and appearance of this building which has been identified as a positive contributor to the special character and appearance of the conservation area and result in less than substantial harm to the conservation area contrary to policies D1 (Design) and D2 (Heritage) of the Camden Local Plan 2017.