

Delegated Report		Analysis sheet		Expiry Date:		31/07/2013	
		N/A / attached		Consultation Expiry Date:		18.7.13	
Officer				Application Number(s)			
Charles Thuaire				2013/3522/P			
Application Address				Drawing Numbers			
1 Mabledon Place London WC1H 9AJ				See ddn			
PO 3/4	Area Team Signature	C&UD	Authorised Officer Signature				
Proposal(s)							
Variation of condition 14 (development to be built in accordance with approved drawings) of planning permission dated 23/12/2011 (ref 2011/4653/P) for extensions and alterations to existing office block, namely to allow alterations to roof plant and halo canopy, alterations to ground floor entrance, alterations to windows and facades of all elevations and enlargement of roof terraces.							
Recommendation(s):		Grant permission					
Application Type:		Variation or Removal of Condition(s)					
Conditions or Reasons for Refusal:		Refer to Draft Decision Notice					
Informatives:							
Consultations							
Adjoining Occupiers:		No. notified	171	No. of responses	00	No. of objections	00
				No. electronic	00		
Summary of consultation responses:		Plus site notice and press advert- No response					
CAAC/Local groups* comments: *Please Specify		Bloomsbury CAAC- 'no comment'					

Site Description

The property is a large office block purpose-built in the 1970's for NALGO, now called UNISON, on a corner site bounded by Euston Road, Mabledon Place and Flaxman Terrace. The building is now vacant following relocation of UNISON to new premises opposite in Euston Road. It contains a 11 storey tower facing Mabledon Place plus a 5 storey annex on the west side facing Euston Rd and a 3 storey element facing Flaxman Terrace containing a double height conference hall above a servicing area. There is a small Class A2 unit, originally accommodating Britannia Building Society, at 135 Euston Road with a separate raised entrance.

The pedestrian entrance is from Mabledon Place and surrounded by a prominent raised brick plinth. The pavement here is also mainly within the site ownership and there is an onstreet loading/taxi dropoff bay outside the entrance. At the rear is an offstreet servicing bay and a 2 way ramp giving access to 2-3 levels of basement carparking, plant and stores. The building has a somewhat brutal and monolithic form with a distinctive ribbed concrete profile and narrow slot windows. The top floor of the tower accommodates roof plant with a couple of projections above roof level.

The property adjoins the Bloomsbury conservation area along Flaxman Terrace at the rear.

Relevant History

23.12.11- pp granted for Extensions and alterations to existing office block to include 13,116 sqm of Class B1a and 182 sqm of Classes A1/A2/A3, as follows: reconfigured basement floors to reduce carparking from 46 to 9 spaces; relocated and enlarged commercial unit at ground floor for flexible use within Classes A1/A2/A3; demolition of conference hall at rear and replacement by 2 new floors of offices; extension of 3rd and 4th floors of annex and addition of 5th floor on annex for offices with external terraces and green roofs on 3rd and 6th floor levels; replacement of 10th floor plantroom on tower by new offices; reconfigured and relocated roof plant; associated external alterations and replacement fenestration including new canopy and forecourt at ground floor, new windows at 10th floor and new halo canopy at rooftop of tower.

Relevant policies

LDF Core Strategy and Development Policies

- CS5 - Managing the impact of growth and development
- CS14 - Promoting high quality places and conserving our heritage
- DP24 - Securing high quality design
- DP25 - Conserving Camden's heritage
- DP26 - Managing the impact of development on occupiers and neighbours

CPG 2011

Assessment

The approved scheme has been worked up in more detail and various amendments are required to satisfy technical/client requirements. The southfacing elevations have the potential to impact on the adjoining conservation area and are assessed accordingly.

There are 13 amendments-

1 Roof level raised The overall increase in height by 550mm is apparently necessary to respond to a need for additional steelwork which consequently raises the plantroom and halo. It will not significantly affect the bulk of the tower or quality of the streetscape and adjoining conservation area.

2 Halo amended Being raised as a consequence of the above, the new halo roof structure will become taller and more dominant as it needs to relate to the plant room roof and conceal it. However the fin edge has been set back further to align with the parapet edge rather than oversailing it as before, so that sightlines are not compromised. Also the vertical panels from which the halo fin projects is set back further to allow a walkway around the whole perimeter, which means that an additional balustrade is introduced. Although the halo will now be more visible and prominent, allowing new views of the vertical louvred panels in long views, the increase in size is broadly acceptable and will not result in an excessively bulky or incongruous structure at roof level. The balustrade will be barely if at all visible. The halo itself is also now redesigned from a solid golden structure to a more lightweight mesh structure with steel louvred panels and rib supports, in order to reduce wind loading. The effect will be different with more articulation and transparency than the approved form; however in principle this is acceptable, subject to more detailing on precise design and colour as required by the previously imposed condition.

3 Ground floor canopy omitted and cladding channel to be raised to base of first floor These changes will leave the ground floor facade on the Mabledon Place frontage plus south and north return elevations with an almost unbroken frontage of glass which is now set in front of the columns rather than recessed behind them. Although this will make the ground floor seem taller and flatter with less articulation, it will create a simpler unified glazed base to the tower, relating to the proposed frontages along Euston Rd. The overall effect is acceptable and does not seriously harm the appearance of the building, conservation area or streetscene.

4 Louvred screen on north duct The omission of the previously proposed vertical duct in the recesses on both south and north facades of the tower is acceptable, as it maintains the characteristic articulation groove of this building; it will be replaced by windows on the north side and by louvers on the south side. This change will not have an adverse effect on the conservation area.

5 Sun screening omitted on south elevation This elevation along Flaxman Terrace faces the conservation area. The previous external projecting grilles and brise-soleils on the western wing at all levels are now omitted for sustainability and daylighting reasons. The scheme now involves large mostly unbroken areas of glass with a vertical emphasis. Although this change reduces the articulation of this street facade in a sensitive location, the vertical glazing corresponds with the verticality of the tower and with the glazing now proposed on the ground floor facades, thus unifying both elements. Moreover the replacement of rendered walls by brick-slip cladding provides articulation and texture to add interest to this wing and further unify it with the tower. Overall it will not harm the conservation area.

6 Brick piers and cladding See note 3 above; the existing columns will however be visible through the new glazed façade to provide continuity with the ribbed profile above.

7 Louvred panel for ducts stops at roof level This change on the southern side will not affect the appearance of the tower or conservation area.

8 Annex lightwell cladding amended The window and louvre arrangement facing the western inset lightwell at all levels is changed, due to omission of the plant room here, but obscure glazing will be retained and indeed enhanced so there will be no impact on amenity. It will have no impact on the streetscene, being internal.

9 External terraces amended The proposed roof terraces of the annex will now be extended towards the tower at lower level and towards Euston Rd at upper level in place of the previously proposed green roofs. There will be no impact on amenity and the increased visibility of the terrace with balustrades on Euston Rd will not harm the streetscene, given other roof top clutter on adjoining buildings.

10 Plant room enclosure amended The plant room and staircase/lift room are relocated into a central position and expanded in size; however due to the raising in height of the surrounding halo structure (see note 2 above), they will become now totally screened and invisible in long views which is acceptable and welcomed.

11 10th floor windows changed The new projecting giant-order windows become smaller with a separation from the roof parapet above; this will improve their relationship with the building and reduce the south facing one's impact on the conservation area.

12 Opening windows omitted This change will not be discernible nor affect the streetscene or conservation area.

13 Continuous vertical louvred panels on west elevation This change on the tower will not affect the appearance of the tower or conservation area.

In conclusion, the various changes individually and cumulatively are acceptable and do not materially harm the appearance of the building, streetscene and conservation area and do not affect neighbour amenity.