

<b>Delegated Report</b>		<b>Analysis sheet</b>		<b>Expiry Date:</b>		<b>08/01/2013</b>	
		N/A / attached		<b>Consultation Expiry Date:</b>		<b>27/12/2012</b>	
<b>Officer</b>				<b>Application Number(s)</b>			
Rob Tulloch				2012/2735/P			
<b>Application Address</b>				<b>Drawing Numbers</b>			
27 John Street London WC1N 2BX				See 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>							
Change of use from publisher's office (Class B1) to dwelling house (Class C3).							
<b>Recommendation(s):</b>		<b>Grant Planning Permission subject to a Section 106 Agreement</b>					
<b>Application Type:</b>		<b>Full Planning Permission</b>					
<b>Conditions:</b>		Refer to Draft Decision Notice					
<b>Informatives:</b>							
<b>Consultations</b>							
<b>Adjoining Occupiers:</b>		No. notified	<b>05</b>	No. of responses	<b>00</b>	No. of objections	<b>00</b>
<b>Summary of consultation responses:</b>		Site notice 30/11/2012-21/12/2012 Press advert 06/12/2012-27/12/2012  No responses were received					
<b>CAAC/Local group comments:</b>		<b>Bloomsbury CAAC</b> support the change of use back residential, but are concerned that future applications may involve more extensive and undesirable changes.					
<b>Site Description</b>							
The application relates to a Grade II listed Georgian town house dating from the early 19 <sup>th</sup> Century. It is part of a terrace of 7 similar houses. The building is 4 storeys, plus mansard and basement, and has a lawful use for office purposes (Class B1a). John Street. The surrounding area is a mixture of office and residential. The site is located within sub-area 10 of the Bloomsbury Conservation area and the Central London Area.							
<b>Relevant History</b>							
PSX0105301 Renewal of planning permission Reg No. PS9704397 for a change of use from offices to a single residential dwellinghouse. Granted 21/01/2002							
PS9704397 Change of use from offices to a single family dwelling house. Granted 17/07/1997							
<u>16 John Street</u> 2012/5456/P Change of use from office (Class B1) to single dwellinghouse (Class C3). Granted 12/02/2013							

## Relevant policies

### **LDF Core Strategy and Development Policies 2010**

CS1 Distribution of growth  
CS5 Managing the impact of growth and development  
CS6 Providing quality homes  
CS8 Promoting a successful and inclusive Camden economy  
CS9 Achieving a successful Central London  
CS11 Promoting sustainable and efficient travel  
CS14 Promoting high quality places and conserving our heritage  
CS19 Delivering and monitoring the Core Strategy

DP2 Making full use of Camden's capacity for housing  
DP6 Lifetime homes and wheelchair homes  
DP13 Employment sites and premises  
DP17 Walking, cycling and public transport  
DP18 Parking standards and limiting the availability of car parking  
DP24 Securing high quality design  
DP25 Conserving Camden's heritage  
DP26 Managing the impact of development on occupiers and neighbours

### **Camden Planning Guidance 2011**

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

### **NPPF 2012**

### **London Plan 2011**

## Assessment

### **1 Proposal**

1.1 The application seeks full planning permission for the change of use of the premises from B1 Office to C3 residential to create a single-family dwellinghouse. The application is not accompanied by a listed building application as no internal alterations are proposed. An informative will be attached to the decision notice reminding the applicant of the need to obtain Listed Building consent for any works to the building.

- Land use
- Standard of proposed accommodation
- Neighbour amenity
- Transport
- Community Infrastructure Levy

### **2 Land use**

#### *Loss of employment*

2.1 The site comprises approximately 440sqm of office floorspace over six floors. Policies DP13 and CS8 require applicants to demonstrate that a site or building is no longer suitable for its existing business and the possibility of retaining, reusing or redeveloping the site or building for similar or alternative business use has been fully explored over an appropriate period of time.

2.2 The applicant has submitted a planning statement from Gerald Eve to justify the loss of office floorspace. The statement refers to policy CS8 which states that future supply for office space in the borough can meet projected demand, and that the Council will consider proposals alternative uses for older office premises particularly for residential purposes.

- 2.3 In relation to policy DP13 and CPG5, the statement notes the buildings in John Street were originally built as dwellings and have rooms of varying sizes which are not ideal for commercial occupation, and the building does not contain any features required by tenants seeking modern office accommodation. Due to its listed status, internal alterations to the plan form may not be acceptable. The applicant states that the building is starting to incur major repair bills, and the only reason that tenants remain is due to the highly discounted rent. It states that the premises have been marketed without success, and there is insufficient income from rent to cover the necessary investment, and the layout and lack of facilities prevent increases in rent.
- 2.4 It is noted that the premises are not suitable for an alternative business use given the location, the constraints of the site and the cost of converting the building to a market standard. The site is not in the industry area, but set amongst established residential and office uses, and has no on-site servicing facilities. It is also noted that the existing office is not Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) compliant as it lacks a level entrance and has no lifts, with the constraints of listing making changes difficult.
- 2.5 The applicant has also submitted a schedule of available office and warehouse accommodation in the WC1 area of between 1,000 and 10,000 square feet (923sqm – 930sqm) which have features modern tenants would expect, such as air conditioning, suspended ceilings and lift. Many of these premises have been refurbished, and few have the constraints of a listed building.
- 2.6 John Street and the surrounding area is a mix of commercial and residential uses, permission has been granted recently for changes of use from office to residential at no. 12 John Street in 2010 (2010/2153/P), no. 18 in 2011 (2011/1285/P), and no. 16 in 2013 (2012/5456/P). Permission has also been granted for similar conversions in neighbouring streets: 25 Johns Mews in 2013 (2012/4925/P), 16 Northington Street in 2013 (2012/4958/P), and 39, 41 and 62 Doughty Street all in 2010 (2010/1395/P, 2010/6055/P & 2010/0187/P). The main reason for granting these permissions were that the sites were older properties only suitable for office accommodation and a change of use to residential would comply with policies CS8 and DP13.
- 2.7 It is accepted that the building is only suitable for office use and would not be suitable for any alternative business use. The LDF acknowledges that the future supply of offices in the borough, particularly in Kings Cross and Euston, can meet projected demand. Policy DP13 allows the Council to adopt a more flexible approach where a site can *only* be used for offices (rather than industry/ storage) and the proposals provide permanent residential or community uses. This is supported by policy CS8, which says the Council "will consider proposals for other uses of older office premises" if they will provide permanent residential or community uses. Moreover, paragraph 51 of the NPPF states local planning authorities should "*normally approve planning applications for change to residential use and any associated development from commercial buildings (currently in the B use classes) where there is an identified need for additional housing in that area, provided that there are not strong economic reasons why such development would be inappropriate.*" Furthermore, planning permission was granted, but not implemented, for a change of use to a single dwelling in 1997 and 2002.
- 2.8 In light of the above, the loss of employment floorspace is considered, given the particular circumstances of this case, to be appropriate and complies with policies CS8 and DP13.

#### *New residential accommodation*

- 2.9 Housing is the priority of the LDF and the provision of new residential floorspace is welcomed as long as it complies with other policies and guidance. The Holborn and Covent Garden Ward is also identified in the LDF as part of the borough where there is a relatively low proportion of large dwellings.

### **3 Standard of proposed accommodation**

### *Residential development standards*

- 3.1 The proposal would provide a large house. The building would benefit from regular sized and shaped rooms, all double bedrooms would be more than 11sqm with single bedrooms in excess of 6.5sqm. The building also benefits from good access to daylight and natural ventilation. The building was originally built as a house and would provide a good standard of accommodation.

### *Lifetime Homes*

- 3.2 Policy DP6 requires all new residential accommodation, including conversions, to meet Lifetime Homes standards. The applicant has provided a Lifetime Homes statement that indicates that the proposal will meet the relevant criteria where possible. Criteria 1 and 2 relate to parking, and part 5 relates to communal staircases so are not relevant. The proposed dwelling would not have level access and hall/doorway widths may not comply, and due to the listed status of the building such changes would be inappropriate (criteria 3 and 6). The proposal would comply with level access over the threshold, adequate circulation space, and be able to provide an entrance level living/bed space and shower/w.c., adaptability, and window/service control locations, (parts 4, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16). There would be sufficient space for future stair lift/through floor lift (part 12), but again the listed status of the building makes this difficult. Policy DP6 accepts that conversions may not be able to meet all the criteria, and listed buildings less so.
- 3.3 As such, the proposal is considered to provide an good level of amenity for future occupiers and would comply with policies CS5, DP6 and DP26 of the LDF and Camden Planning Guidance. A condition will ensure such measures are retained.

## **4 Amenity**

- 4.1 There are no extensions proposed nor additional windows so the proposal would not affect neighbouring properties in terms of light or privacy. The change of use to residential, in a street that is a mixture of offices and residential, is not considered to create any other amenity issues. As such the proposal is not considered to harm the amenity of adjoining occupiers and would comply with policies CS5 and DP26 of the LDF and Camden Planning Guidance.

## **5 Transport**

### *Cycle storage*

- 5.1 The London Plan requires two cycle storage spaces for residential units of more than two bedrooms. The plans submitted do not show any cycle storage, but there is space in the under pavement vaults and elsewhere within the building or in the garden. As such this detail will be secured by condition.

### *Carparking*

- 5.2 The site has a Public Transport Accessibility Level of (PTAL) of 6b (excellent) and is within a Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ). Kings Cross (CA-D) CPZ operates Mon-Fri 08:30-18:30, Sat 08:30-13:30 and 105 parking permits have been issued for every 100 estimated parking bays within the zone. This means that more parking permits have been issued than spaces available. The site is also within the "Clear Zone Region", for which the whole area is considered to suffer from parking stress. Not making the new dwelling car-free would increase demand for on-street parking in the Controlled Parking Zone the site is within. Therefore, the development should be made car-free through a Section 106 agreement in line with policy DP18 and the London Plan. The applicant has agreed to the principle of this.

**6 Community Infrastructure Levy**

6.1 The development may be CIL liable because it involves the creation of an additional residential unit, but is not currently vacant. Based on the Mayor's CIL charging schedule and the information given on the plans, the charge would be £22,000 (440sqm x £50) if the building were vacant for at least six months prior to the change of use being implemented. This will be collected by Camden after the scheme is implemented and could be subject to surcharges for failure to assume liability, for failure to submit a commencement notice and/or for late payment, and subject to indexation in line with the construction costs index. An informative will be attached advising the applicant of this charge.

**7 Recommendation:** Grant Planning Permission Subject to a Section 106 Agreement for car-free housing.

**Disclaimer**

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