

Delegated Report (Members Briefing)		Analysis sheet		Expiry Date:	09/10/2012
		N/A / attached		Consultation Expiry Date:	20.9.12 Reconsult- 29.10.12
Officer			Application Number(s)		
Charles Thuairé			1. 2012/3962/P 2. 2012/3998/L		
Application Address			Drawing Numbers		
London House Mecklenburgh Square London WC1N 2AB			see decision notice		
PO 3/4	Area Team Signature	C&UD	Authorised Officer Signature		
Proposal(s)					
1. Erection of a 4th floor mansard roof extension on north side (facing Mecklenburgh Square) to provide 16 additional student bedrooms, installation of new roof plant at northeast corner of block, installation of new door in courtyard elevation and widening of kitchen entrance on Doughty street elevation.					
2. Erection of a 4th floor mansard roof extension on north side (facing Mecklenburgh Square) to provide 16 additional student bedrooms, internal alterations to staff rooms to provide additional bedrooms at lower ground and ground floors, installation of new roof plant at northeast corner of block, installation of new door in courtyard elevation and widening of kitchen entrance on Doughty street elevation, and various other internal and external alterations					
Recommendation(s):		1. Grant permission subject to S106 2. Grant listed building consent			
Application Type:		Full Planning Permission			
Conditions or Reasons for Refusal:		Refer to Draft Decision Notice			
Informatives:					

Consultations

Adjoining Occupiers:	No. notified	110	No. of responses	04	No. of objections	03
Summary of consultation responses:			No. Electronic	00		
CAAC/Local groups* comments: <small>*Please Specify</small>						

Plus site notices and press advert.

Objections from 34 Doughty St, 9 Guilford St-

Implications of parking- would students have access to parking permits? Implications of noise from widened kitchen entrance- will noise nuisance worsen from emptying/filling of bins outside?

(see Transport section below in Assessment paras 5 and 6)

Extension would spoil historical character of square

(see Design/bulk section below in Assessment para 13)

Objection from 16 Mecklenburgh Square-

View of roof structures which are part of original building will be lost from Square; massing from Square is adverse and proportions will become stilted, line and proportions of listed building should be preserved; agree with 20thC Society submissions.

(see Design/bulk section below in Assessment para 13)

Comment from 32 Doughty St-

new ventilation plant is more extensive than existing and thus need reassurance that it will not create noise nuisance; problem of noise from parties in Great Hall which can disturb Doughty St residents thus would like secondary glazing on windows facing them which is more environmentally sound than just installing new radiators; conditions needed to restrict deliveries and rubbish collections via kitchen door to prevent noise nuisance.

(see Amenity section below in Assessment paras 10 and 6; use of Great Hall and kitchen delivery hours will not change as part of this application and are not subject to planning control as they relate to existing use and operations of the College)

Bloomsbury CAAC object- we feel that the added floor would render the building too monolithic; we appreciate the step in scale between the corners and the centre of the facade and the interesting roof profile.

(see Design/bulk section below in Assessment para 13)

Twentieth Century Society object- proposal will detrimentally affect this designated heritage asset. London House is grade II listed, built between 1936 and 1963 in a Neo Georgian style to the designs of Sir Herbert Baker – who prepared a complete scheme in the 1930s. The northern block, the last to be constructed was completed after Baker's death in 1944 to simplified designs. The current north elevation that faces Mecklenburg Square is well proportioned with a stone dressed façade. The existing profile of the roof graduates in a subtle step down and provides an interesting roof profile. The central entrance arches and proportions of this block purposefully correspond with those of the opposite earlier block which faces Guildford Street.

The interesting roof profile will be lost in the proposals to add an additional storey to this façade, which will also alter the massing and proportions of this elevation. As proposed, the additional storey will result in a less interesting façade, and detrimentally affect London House which makes a positive contribution to the Bloomsbury Conservation Area. Our view is that this neo-Georgian style of architecture is underappreciated and that such interesting listed examples should be protected from alteration that will detract from their architectural interest and significance.

(see Design/bulk section below in Assessment para 13)

No comments received from other societies, eg. Victorian Society, Georgian Society etc.

English Heritage- no objection and authorisation for LB consent issued.

Site Description

The site is a large block bounded by the south side of Mecklenburgh Square Gardens to the north, Guilford Street to the south, Mecklenburgh Place to the west, and Doughty Street to the east. The site is entirely occupied by London House used by Goodenough College as a hall of residence for international postgraduate students, in conjunction with William Goodenough House to the north side of Meck Square. Its original use was to provide student accommodation to overseas students from the Dominion and Colonies of the British Empire.

It has a main entrance off Mecklenburgh Square and an internal quadrangle courtyard. The buildings are designed in neo-Georgian style with mansards and built in phases from 1930's to 1960's, ranging from 4-6 storeys plus basement facing Mecklenburgh Square to 4-5 storeys plus basement facing Guilford Street. They all have brick facades with slate roofs.

The property is located in the Bloomsbury Conservation Area, and is listed Grade 2.

The northern side built in the 1960's is subject of the application to erect a roof extension and currently has a lower central frontage with main entrance flanked by higher corner elements

Relevant History

17.1.91- pp granted for change of use from student leisure facility to public health & leisure club.

5.11.91- pp/lbc refused for roof extension on SW corner.

25.2.93- pp granted for conversion of ground floor communal space to study bedrooms.

20.10.05- pp/lbc granted for 2 new a/c units on roof of NE corner.

8.1.07- pp/lbc granted for basement level louvres and other internal alterations

Relevant policies

LDF Core Strategy and Development Policies 2010

CS1 - Distribution of growth
CS3 - Other highly accessible areas
CS5 - Managing the impact of growth and development
CS6 - Providing quality homes
CS9 - Achieving a successful Central London
CS11 - Promoting sustainable and efficient travel
CS13 - Tackling climate change
CS14 - Promoting high quality places and conserving our heritage
CS19 - Delivering and monitoring the Core Strategy

DP6 - Lifetime homes and wheelchair homes
DP9 - Student housing etc.
DP16 - transport implications of development
DP17 - Walking, cycling and public transport
DP19 - Managing the impact of parking
DP20 - Movement of goods and materials
DP22 - Sustainable construction
DP23 - Water
DP24 - Securing high quality design
DP25 - Conserving Camden's heritage
DP26 - Managing the impact of development on occupiers and neighbours
DP28 - Noise and vibration
DP29 - Improving access

CPG 2011

Bloomsbury CAAMS 2011

London Plan 2011

NPPF 2012

Assessment

Proposal

1. The scheme is to refurbish and enhance the building as a hall of residence and provide more student rooms both through internal reconfiguration and within a new roof extension. The scheme involves the following:
 - Removal of existing 3rd floor mansard roof on north side above entrance and its replacement by a deeper 3rd floor with full brick-faced storey and 8 sash windows in line with lower floors and a new 4th floor mansard with 8 dormer windows to line up with adjoining mansard roofs on the 2 higher end blocks. This will result in slightly enlarging bedrooms on the 3rd floor and will provide 16 more single bedrooms with shared facilities in the mansard roof.
 - Upgrading of existing bedrooms in west wing of block and conversion of limited number of former staff offices and other areas to create 15 study bedrooms at lower ground and ground floors.
 - Replacement and enhancement of roof plant in northeast corner facing Doughty St with new plant including a larger kitchen extract unit. The latter has since been revised by setting it back from the street frontage to ensure that it is not visible from the street.
 - Creation of new access internally, replacing a window to a door, from the quadrangle to Freddie's bar beneath the Great Hall.
 - Improvement of service access from Doughty St by widening existing kitchen door to double pair of doors.
 - Replacement of serviced infrastructure including upgrading heating in Great Hall with new radiators; new electricity, plumbing etc; refurbishment of all bedrooms with new fitted furniture and doors; refurb of all communal areas (lifts, stairs, corridors, bathrooms and toilets) and 2 new kitchenettes.

Due to the need to consult on the proposal to demolish part of a listed building, ie. the roof structure, further letters of consultation were sent to the statutory amenity societies and English Heritage. As a result, the 20th C Society objected (see consultation section above).

Land use

2. The scheme overall will result in an increase of 31 students from 308 to 339 bedrooms. However the element of the scheme that requires planning permission (bearing in mind that the Council has no planning control over the number of additional bedrooms created by internal alterations) involves accommodation for 16 more students. Nevertheless overall this is a relatively small extension to an existing large student hall which would have a very limited impact on the surrounding area in terms of amenity, use of local services, traffic generation and the overall issue of 'studentification' of the area. The new bedrooms, by virtue of their location and access, would form part of the main hall and be subject to the same controls as the existing building in terms of student management and occupancy restrictions as well as no access to onstreet carparking. The bedrooms will not be self-contained so cannot be used as alternative forms of dwelling units. Their sizes are adequate and meet relevant standards for non-selfcontained student rooms. Conditions will be attached to require their occupation in accordance with the hall's existing management plan. Sufficient open space and community facilities are already provided within the hall and adjoining blocks and within Mecklenburgh Square (a private open space) for student use so that there will be no impact on local infrastructure.
3. All new or altered bedrooms here will comply with Building Regulations and the DDA in terms of access, as well as all relevant criteria of the Council's Lifetime Home standards as far as possible, and indeed will improve access for people with disabilities (such as creating new wheelchair access to Freddie's bar).

Sustainability

4. A BREEAM Multi-residential building assessment has been submitted which shows that the extension meets a Very Good score (57%) as well as meeting the 50% minimum scores for the categories of water, materials and energy. No formal energy statement is required for the extension or the remaining building (due to the size of the extension), and it is recognised that the potential for energy efficiency works is to some extent limited by the listed status of London

House. However an energy statement has been submitted, summarising the approach in meeting the requirements of CPG3 (sustainability), regarding 'be lean', 'be clean' etc, and outlining a 'best endeavours' exercise in energy efficiency improvements as part of the refurbishment works. The anticipated BREEAM targets will be secured by a S106 clause.

Transport

5. The proposed development includes the creation of 20 cycle parking spaces next to the existing racks in the quadrangle, which is welcomed. The additional student accommodation will not generate additional demand for onstreet carspaces as, in common with the existing bedrooms, students do not have rights of access to parking permits and will be constrained by the student management plan.
6. The level of servicing will not significantly intensify with the additional accommodation and alterations proposed. Indeed the widened kitchen door will enable easier access for trolleys and goods to enter the kitchen without having to be unloaded outside on the external forecourt on Doughty St, which will mean that less noise nuisance should occur to residents opposite.
7. Although there are no changes proposed to the footprint of the site, the proposals include significant internal refurbishment work across the building as well as the construction of the mansard roof to create 16 new student rooms. This is of concern as the site is located within the Clear Zone Region which is a highly constrained area in regard to transport. Due to the scale and kind of this development and the likely method of construction, a full Construction Management Plan secured via S106 is not considered necessary; however a condition will be required in order to mitigate any adverse impacts through a Construction Management Statement.
8. It is also advised that any occupation of the highway, such as for hoarding, skips or storage of materials, will require a licence from Highways Management and this, along with the existing on-street waiting and loading controls, should be sufficient to ensure the work is carried out in such a way as to not adversely affect the safety or operation of the public highway.

Amenity

9. The wing lies opposite a private open space (Mecklenburgh Square) to the north and the courtyard and more bedrooms of the Hall itself to the south. The extension will have no impact on neighbour amenity in terms of daylight, sunlight, sun-on-ground, privacy or outlook.
10. The roofplant in the NE corner will only have a potential impact on noise levels of neighbouring premises in Doughty St and Meck Square. The acoustic report submitted shows that the plant is capable of meeting Council standards of 10dBA below background noise levels and sets appropriate noise limits on the operation of such plant. Nevertheless details of the precise plant to be used are not known at this stage and more details of the plant and any acoustic screening required should be submitted for approval later via condition.

Design/bulk

11. London House lies on the south side of Mecklenburgh Square and was listed in 1996 at grade II.
12. It was built over a number of years in three distinct phases with the first section being the south and east blocks in 1935-37 by Sir Herbert Baker. The western block was added in 1948 by Alexander T. Scott in Baker's style, although the design was simplified. Lastly the northern block was constructed in 1961-63 but this was carried out in an even simpler style which lacks the stonework of the other parts of the building. A model exists within London House which shows the intended form of the building under Baker's design and which demonstrates it was the intention that the three phases of building would have a more uniform appearance. As built, the different construction dates of the parts of the building are clearly evident through the gradual simplification of the design.

Architecture of the building

13. As was mentioned above, the building is divided into three blocks which although linked

architecturally are discernibly different. The north block was the last to be built and is a somewhat watered-down version of the other two. The whole north elevation has a loose symmetry but the façade is not perfectly balanced with the western section being a storey taller than the east. Whilst the central section is one storey lower, this does not appear to be an integral feature of the overall façade. Initial early designs for the whole building (by Sir Herbert Baker) show that the original intention for this façade was to have a roof height consistent with the western block. However part of the special interest of the building is its incremental development in stages which give the whole composition a more relaxed appearance as opposed to rigid symmetry and uniformity. Interest and the informality of the roof form of this façade would still be maintained by the projecting blocks at each end of the façade and the raised section to the west. The roof extension with the brick-faced 3rd floor and new mansarded 4th floor is designed to match the existing and in principle no objection is raised.

Loss of fabric/roof structure

14. This part of the building only dates from the 1960s and as such the value of the fabric (which is designed to reflect the 1930s elements) itself is much more limited. An inspection of the accommodation on the third floor reveals it to be unremarkable student rooms with no features of merit. Having inspected most parts of the building, there are much more significant interiors to be found on the original part. No fabric of note would be lost.

Relationship to Mecklenburgh Square

15. The proposed development will not raise the overall height of the Mecklenburgh Square elevation although it will increase the bulk of the building. The east side of the square is bounded by 4 storey buildings (some with mansards) whilst the block to the north (William Goodenough House) is 5 storeys in height. In this context the additional bulk will not unbalance the composition of the square. It will not harm the character and appearance of the Bloomsbury conservation area.

New brickwork

16. Samples of bricks proposed for the extension have been inspected on site and have found to be an excellent match for the existing brickwork in terms of their size, colouration and texture.
17. A sample panel including pointing colour and profile should be provided but this can be dealt with by condition.

Roof plant

18. The additional/reconfigured ducting is acceptable in principle. However concerns were raised at its visibility from Doughty St as well as within the courtyard, as the new plant was higher and closer to the edge than existing and would be in line with an existing chimney (which is visible from ground level). Revised plans now rearrange the plant so that it is further set back from the roof edge and in particular is behind the existing chimney to ensure that it will not be visible. The roof plant is thus now acceptable as it will not be visible from the street or courtyard and thus not harmful to the building and conservation area.

Listed building alterations

Freddie's bar

19. It is the intention to provide level access to Freddie's Bar so that wheelchair users can use this facility. Internally this space has little architectural interest so the provision of a small lift would not affect any fabric of note. It was clear from a site inspection that internal access to this space is difficult as this is only possible down two short flights of steps. Any platform lift would likely block the corridor for other users.
20. The proposed route would be to alter the existing external window to a door. Given that alternative routes to the bar are not possible (and it is not possible to provide the service elsewhere in the building) such an approach in principle is acceptable. The design of the door is in keeping with the fenestration of the building and maintains the maximum amount of fabric possible in the circumstances.

Side door

21. On the east elevation an enlarged service door would be provided. This will involve widening the existing opening and piecing in a new section to the stone surround. The new doors would match the design of those found on the same elevation. The design is in keeping with overall façade of this elevation so no objection is raised.

Heating to Main Hall

22. This is one of the most significant spaces in the building and therefore sensitive to change. There is a clear need for the installation of heating to this space so no objection is raised in principle. The focus of the space is towards the ornate ceiling and the panelling on the upper sections of the walls. The lower section of the wall consists of a plain stone “dado” which is to an extent hidden by the tables and seating in the room. Radiators would be positioned around the perimeter of the room rising no higher than the dado. The general visual emphasis of the space is upwards and whilst the radiators would be visible they would be seen in conjunction with the dining tables and chairs line the edge of the space. Pipework is provided from below (within the suspended ceiling of Freddie’s Bar) so that only a minimal number of holes are required to be drilled through the floor.

Alterations to rooms

23. Generally the existing bedrooms are to be redecorated and upgraded. An inspection of a sample of these showed no features of interest (except for the parquet floor which will be retained) so no objection is raised to these works. Although the entrance doors to each room will be widened these are of limited interest, with no ornamentation and would be replaced with doors of a similar appearance.

24. Within the mansard the walls will be lined to increase the insulation. No features of note would be affected by these works so no objection is raised.

25. Where bathrooms are to be provided or refurbished these areas are of limited interest.

26. A number of additional bedrooms are provided by converting office space to bedrooms. These offices are of limited interest and contain no features of interest, therefore no objection is raised.

Community Infrastructure Levy

27. The scheme will create an additional 318sqm floorspace, which will attract a CIL charge of £15,900 (318sqm x £50).

Recommendation-

1. grant planning permission subject to S106 on BREEAM post-construction review
2. grant LB consent

DISCLAIMER

Decision route to be decided by nominated members on Monday 5th November 2012.
For further information please click [here](#).