CUNDALL

Mediacom

124 Theobolds Road

Design, Access and Impact Statement

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		Initials	JH	RJS	JH
		Signature			

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1. Introduction

This Planning, Design and Access Statement has been prepared in support of the planning application for the replacement of chiller units at the roof of the existing office building at 124 Theobolds Road, WC1.

Planning History

The building was originally granted consent back in the 1980's, there have been various applications for amendments and replacement plant and telecommunications cabinets to the office building, notable applications noted below:

In 1995, planning permission was granted for the relocation of existing telecommunications cabinets and associated equipment from internal room to the rooftop of the existing office building by virtue of planning permission reference 2005/4523/P

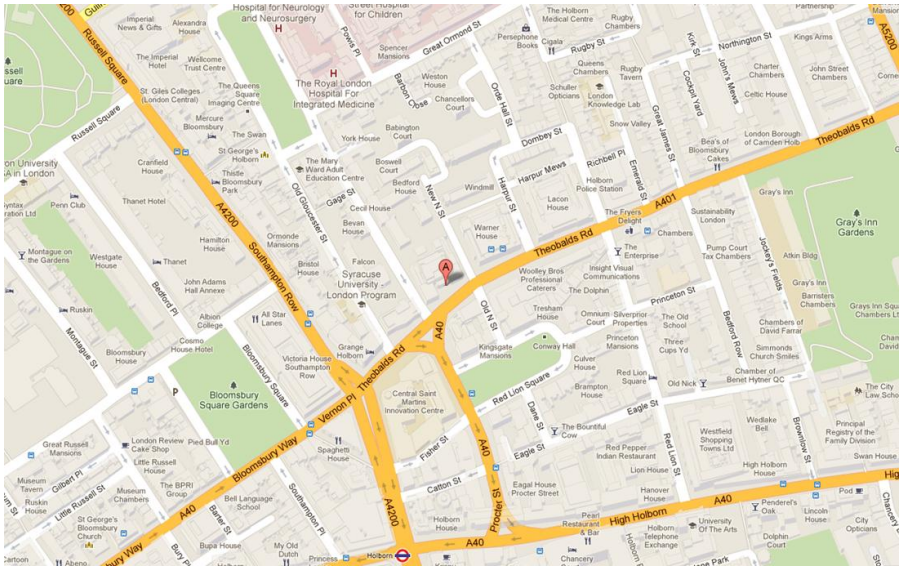
In 1996, as a result of planning application reference 2006/2803/P, planning consent was granted for external alterations to the existing office building, comprising changes to the entrance portal on Theobalds Road elevation, reinstatement of windows on the Boswell Street, New North Street and North car park elevations; together with the repositioning of the New North Street car park entrance gates to facilitate the installation of 26 cycle parking racks and changes to the parking layout in the existing parking area.

Most recently, in 2011, consent was granted for application reference 2011/3981/P for the relocation of existing telecommunications cabinets and associated equipment from internal room to the rooftop of the existing office building.

2. Site & Surrounding Area

124 Theobald's Road London is a multi-storey air conditioned office building (Class B1 use), located on Theobald's Road close to Holborn Circus. It is a steel framed structure comprising ground floor plus eight floors of offices, with chiller plant located on the roof and electrical switch gear and boilers located in the basement.

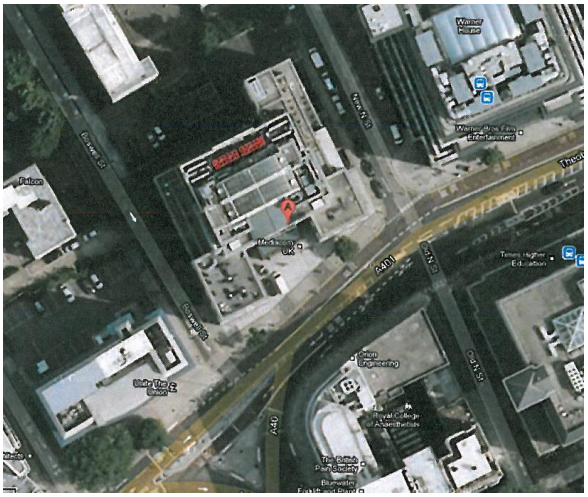
The buildings adjacent to the application site along Theobolds Road are predominantly commercial office buildings of a similar scale to the application site. The main frontage is on Theobolds Road and the building is bounded by New North Street to the east and Boswell Street to the west. To the north, along Boswell Street are residential buildings of 7 – 8 storeys and along New North Street is a mix of commercial and residential uses.



(source, Google Maps)

3. Scheme Description

The proposals forming this application seek to replace two existing chiller units on the roof of 124 Theobolds Road. The existing chiller units have come to the end of their useful life and are no longer fit for purpose. The existing units are located at the north side of the building and the new replacement units are proposed in the same location.



At present, there are 2 Montair RO V 2x140 SP twin circuit air cooled chillers located in an external enclosure at roof level. The installed machines are rated at a nominal 614KW as per the figure published in the manufactures literature. The data sheet for the new units have been provided by Climaveneta (attached as an appendix of the environmental noise report). The new units have a minimum footprint and are of an extremely compact layout.

The image above (right) shows the area of the chiller plant marked in red – a long rectangular area at the north side of the building. The image on the left shows the rear elevation as seen from street level. These images show that the plant area and chiller units cannot be seen from ground level.

The Montair machines visually appear to be in good condition, but the service records and maintenance technician account contradicts the visual appearance with the machines suffering from a plethora of problems. The compressors of the existing chiller units, for example, are showing signs of failure and whilst the applicant had considered their replacement, for a number of reasons it was considered that the provisions of new units was considered the most appropriate option, not least since the manufacturer has ceased trading, making obtaining spare parts very difficult to get.

The image below shows the existing chiller units in situ. The proposed units will be in the same location, with broadly similar dimensions; they are more modern units with more efficient cooling output, more energy efficient and less noisy chillers than the existing unit.

The proposed Turbocor chillers will be quieter than the existing units, in addition the turbocor fans are much more efficient. They are specifically designed outdoor units for the production of chilled water featuring an oil-free centrifugal compressor. The base, supporting structure and panels are of galvanized epoxy powder coated steel with increased thickness. The proposed chiller is a flexible and reliable unit; it easily adapts itself to different thermal load conditions thanks to the precise thermoregulation together with the use of inverter technology.

4. Planning Policy

This policy review sets out planning policies that are considered relevant with regard to the proposed replacement of two existing chiller units at 124 Theobolds Road, WC1. The building is not listed and lies outside of any conservation area.

4.1 National Policy Context

The government has recently adopted the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the overarching aim of which is to promote good quality sustainable development.

The NPPF seeks to prevent both new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability; and states that planning policies and decisions should aim to:

- avoid noise from giving rise to significant adverse impacts on health and quality of life as a result of new development;
- mitigate and reduce to a minimum other adverse impacts on health and quality of life arising from noise from new development, including through the use of conditions;
- recognise that development will often create some noise and existing businesses wanting to develop in continuance of their business should not have unreasonable restrictions put on them because of changes in nearby land uses since they were established.

4.2 Local Policy context

The overarching framework for policy guidance is set out in Camden's Local Development Framework and specifically the Core Strategy, which was adopted in November 2010 and seeks to make Camden more sustainable, in particular and of relevance to this application, improving the environmental performance of buildings.

Core Strategy Policy CS13 says that the Council will require all development to take measures to minimise the effects of, and adapt to, climate change and encourage all development to meet the highest feasible environmental standards that are financially viable during construction and occupation. This will be done in a number of ways, including by minimising carbon emissions from the development, construction and occupation of buildings.

Protecting amenity is highlighted in Camden's core strategy as a key part of successfully managing growth in Camden. Council will expect development to avoid harmful effects on

the amenity of existing and future occupiers and nearby properties or, where this is not possible, to take appropriate measures to minimise potential negative impacts. More detail and guidance of relevance to this application is contained in Camden Development Policies, notably policy DP26 on the impact of development on occupiers and neighbours other policies in Camden Development Policies also contribute to protecting amenity in the borough by setting out our detailed approach to specific issues, such as noise and vibration (policy DP28).

Camden's Development policy DP26 relates specifically to managing the impact of development on occupiers and neighbours. It states that the Council will protect the quality of life of occupiers and neighbours by only granting permission for development that does not cause harm to amenity. The factors that the council will consider that are relevant to this application are:

a) overshadowing and outlook;
b) noise and vibration levels;
c) the inclusion of appropriate attenuation measures.

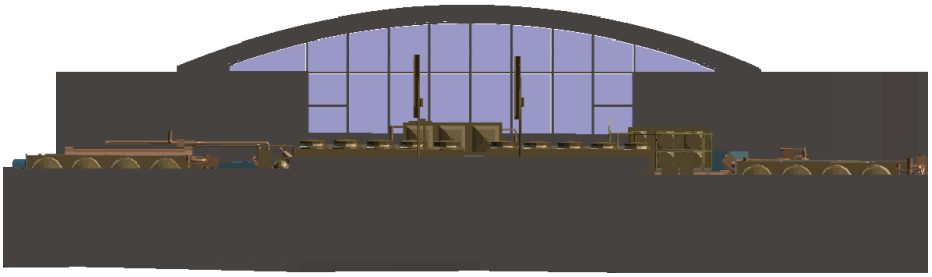
Policy DP28 relates specifically to noise and vibration and states that the Council will only grant permission for plant or machinery if it can be operated without causing harm to amenity and does not exceed the noise thresholds. It requires that any fixed services plant be designed so that the cumulative noise is no greater than a level which is 10 dB(A) below the existing background noise level.

5. Design &Access

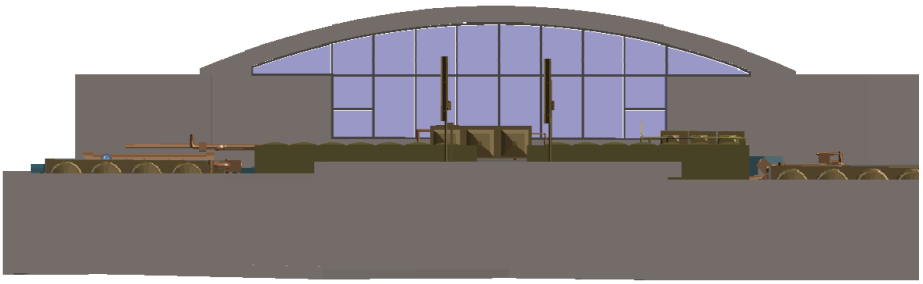
5.1 Design

The plant deck has an acoustic screen on three sides, the fourth side of the enclosure is formed by a façade of the building. The top of the plant deck (and therefore the existing chillers) is exposed to atmosphere.

The new chiller units will be located in almost exactly the same location as the existing units. The new units will be located behind the existing parapet and will not increase in height over the parapet having no visual impact from street level. The images below show the existing and proposed views of the south elevation at roof level (plan reference 1004848-CDL-BS-proposed elevation as submitted with the application).



(existing south elevation visual)

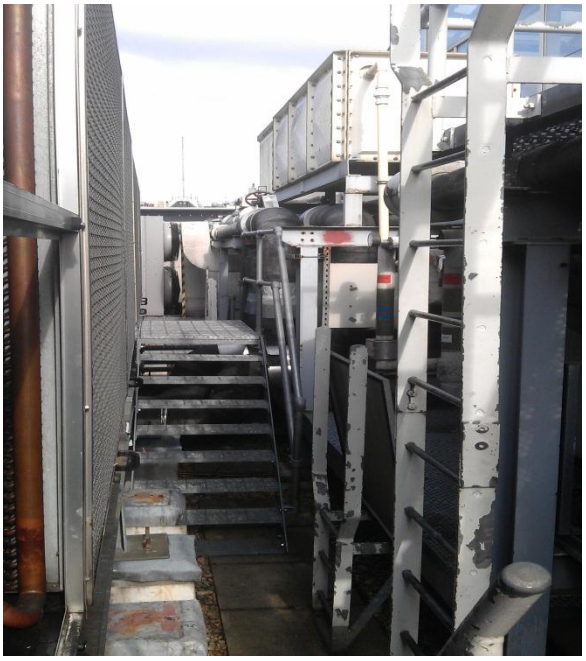


(proposed south elevation visual)

The data sheet for the new units have been provided by Climaveneta (attached as an appendix of the environmental noise report). The new units have a minimum footprint and are of an extremely compact layout with dimensions of 7,000mm in length x 2,260mm width and 2,430mm in height. The Catalogue reference for the existing model is 7,500mm long x 2,100mm wide x 2,515 in height showing a broadly similar scale overall of the proposed units.

5.2 Access

Access to the roof and plant area will not change, the existing exit from the building and pedestrian walkways will be as they are and full access for maintenance purposes only will continue.



6. Impact and amenity

6.1 Energy Efficiency

The new chillers are much more efficient than the existing units, reducing the CO2 emissions, improving the energy efficiency of the units, which is entirely in accordance with both local and national planning policy for more sustainable, energy efficient buildings.

6.2 Acoustics

As described in the letter provided by Cundall on the acoustics of the proposed chiller units, the existing units are provided by Montair. The data sheet for the existing units shows that the Sound Pressure Level at 10 metres for each unit is 69.1dB(A). The noise of two units together is 72dB(A).

The data sheet for the new units, which are provided by Climaveneta, shows that the Sound Pressure Level at 10 metres for each unit is 59dB(A). The noise level of two units together will be 62dB(A).

Therefore, once the new units are installed and operating, the total noise level at the nearest noise-sensitive premises will be 10dB(A) lower. This is a significant improvement in the noise climate caused by plant at 124 Theobald's Road.

The adjacent residential units on Boswell Street are 28 metres from the location of the existing/proposed chillers. The noise level of the two units will reduce from 62dB(A) to just 36.8dB(A) outside the nearest noise sensitive premises. It is therefore considered that the proposed replacement chiller units are acceptable in relation to their impact on noise.

6.3 Visual amenity

The proposal is to replace the existing two chiller units, which are currently in the plant deck of the above building. The two new units will be broadly similar dimensions to the existing chiller units and therefore have will no impact on visual amenity.

The plant deck has an acoustic screen on three sides, the fourth side of the enclosure is formed by a façade of the building. The top of the plant deck (and therefore the existing chillers) is exposed to atmosphere.

Therefore there will be no change in appearance of the building as a result of the application proposals which is therefore considered acceptable in policy terms.

7. Conclusion

As discussed in this statement, the proposed new chiller units are much more efficient than the existing units, reducing the CO2 emissions and therefore reducing the carbon footprint, improving the energy efficiency of the units, which is entirely in accordance with both local and national planning policy for more sustainable, energy efficient buildings.

The proposed new chillers are located within the existing plant deck on the roof of 124 Theobolds Road. The plant deck has an acoustic screen on three sides, the fourth side of the enclosure is formed by a façade of the building. The top of the plant deck (and therefore the existing chillers) is exposed to atmosphere. The existing plant deck lies behind a parapet; therefore the new chiller units will have no visual impact.

The noise level of the two units will reduce from 62dB(A) to just 36.8dB(A) outside the nearest noise sensitive premises and as such the new units will be substantially quieter than the existing unit and within the levels set as accepbtable by Camden Council.

In light of the above, it is considered that the new chiller units are appropriate and conclude that the application can be approved accordingly.