

Delegated Report		Analysis sheet		Expiry Date:		20/09/2012	
		N/A / attached		Consultation Expiry Date:		06/09/2012	
Officer				Application Number(s)			
Sam Fowler				2012/3953/P			
Application Address				Drawing Numbers			
Russell Square House 9 Russell Square London WC1B 5EG				Refer to draft decision notice			
PO 3/4		Area Team Signature		C&UD		Authorised Officer Signature	
Proposal(s)							
Installation of new black wrought iron railings and access gate to front lightwell, following removal of existing railings and gate in connection with existing currency exchange office (Class A2).							
Recommendation(s):		Refuse planning permission					
Application Type:		Full Planning Permission					
Conditions or Reasons for Refusal:		Refer to Draft Decision Notice					
Informatives:							
Consultations							
Adjoining Occupiers:		No. notified	90	No. of responses No. electronic	02 00	No. of objections	01
Summary of consultation responses:		Advertisement: 16/08/2012, expired 06/09/2012 Site notice: 08/08/2012, expired 29/08/2012 No objections from neighbouring residents were received.					
CAAC/Local groups* comments: <small>*Please Specify</small>		The Bloomsbury CAAC has no objection to the proposal. The Marchmont Association feels that the additional height on the railings is excessive and out of character with the locality. It also creates a fortress mentality, when the replacement of the entire railings with a traditional railing with finials would have the desired effect of keeping vagrants out of the basement well.					
Relevant policies							
LDF Core Strategy and Development Policies							
CS5 – Managing the impact of growth and development; CS7 Promoting Camden's centres and shops; CS14 – Promoting high quality places and conserving our heritage. DP24 – Securing high quality design; DP25 – Conserving Camden's heritage;							

**Camden Planning Guidance 2011
Bloomsbury Conservation Area Statement
National Planning Policy Framework 2012**

Site Description

The subject property is located on the western corner of the intersection between Russell Square and Woburn Place. The application relates to an area enclosed by low level iron railing, inside which a set of stairs accessing a basement level are within a lightwell.

The site is within Bloomsbury Conservation Area.

Relevant History

None

Assessment

Proposal

Permission is sought for the replacement of the existing railing on the site with a set of railing that is significantly higher. The existing railings are approximately 885mm in height. The new railing would be 1678mm in height and would surround the entire outside of the light well.

Design and Character.

Under CPG 1, it is stated that:

“Creating open lightwells with railings in front of a shopfront is not generally acceptable as it prevents window shopping and disrupts the buildings relationship to the rhythm of the street. This is also the case if the shopfront has been converted into residential accommodation.”

In addition to this, it is identified under the Bloomsbury Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy 5.40 that: *“The railings and basements along the majority of frontages are an important facet of the character of the area. The Council will resist the loss of original railings and infilling of basement lightwells where this forms part of the area’s character. However, where the introduction of shops has resulted in the infilling of basements and the streetscape is characterised by the pavement extending to the building, the excavation of the basement would not normally be acceptable.”*

There is a predominant pattern for railings in the area around Russell Square. To the west of the square the railings are below shoulder height with simple finials. The Square itself has taller railings as would be expected and as befits the enclosure of such a public space. Along the north side of the Square, where the site is located, the railings vary in design and style but are almost exclusively set at roughly the same height as the existing railings. The proposed increase in railing height would roughly 800mm more than the existing railings, which be a highly visible alteration to the front elevation and the lightwell enclosures and would fail to respect the predominant pattern of development. The proposed railings, when set upon the plinth, would rise to close to 2m and would be overly dominant and inappropriate in this location. The detailing of the proposed finials is unclear from the drawings – they appear neither contemporary nor heritage in style. Any agreed alterations to the railings would need to be accompanied by further design details which are sympathetic to the local character. The height and design of the proposals are considered contrary to policies DP25 and DP25 and should be refused.

Amenity: The proposed works would be contained within the site, and would be at a level that would not cause any impact to any residential amenity in the neighbouring area.

Recommendation: Refuse planning permission

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