

**24 - 28 Bloomsbury Way, London, WC1A 2PX**

**Planning, Design & Access Statement**



**In support of a planning application for the installation  
of a new condenser unit fixed to the external wall of the lower ground  
floor alley to serve the Comms Room**

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**PLANNING**  
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	<b>Contents</b>	<b>Page</b>
1.	Introduction	3
2.	Scheme Proposal	3
3.	Site Context	4
4.	Planning History	4
5.	Planning Policy	5
6.	Design & Access Principles	6
7.	Planning Assessment	6
8.	Conclusions	7

## 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This Planning, Design & Access Statement has been prepared by Washbourne Field Limited to accompany the submission of a planning application for the installation of a condenser unit to be sited on the external wall of the lower ground floor alley way to serve the Comms Room at 24 - 28 Bloomsbury Way.
- 1.2 The purpose of this Statement is to assess the planning and design considerations of the proposed plant equipment. An Environmental Noise Report has been prepared by Cundall Acoustics and should be read alongside this Statement.
- 1.3 This application has been submitted on the advice of Mr Hugh Miller, a Planning Officer, with Camden Council, who previously advised WFP via e-mail on 8<sup>th</sup> June 2012 that the installation of the proposed plant equipment required assessment on a stand- alone basis, rather than seeking to vary an earlier planning permission (2011/1243/P) which was granted on 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2011 for installation of roof level plant within an acoustic enclosure and the replacement of all windows from aluminium to crittal framed double glazed windows of offices (Class B1a).
- 1.4 The enclosed Environmental Noise Report also follows the advice of Ms Maya Rhodes, an Environmental Health Officer with the Council, and provides a predicted noise level for the new condensing unit at 1 metre to the nearest sensitive façade to meet the Council's Noise & Vibration Policy DP28.

## 2.0 Scheme Proposal

- 2.1 The planning application seeks planning permission for the installation of a small condensing unit to be fixed to the external wall of the lower ground floor alleyway on the front elevation of the building, to serve the adjoining Comms Room.
- 2.2 Whilst the Council did grant planning permission (2011/1243/P) for a scheme of refurbishment works to the building including additional and replacement mechanical plant and equipment at roof level on 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2011, it has become apparent during the course of the works, that the Applicant needs to install a small condenser unit to the lower ground floor elevation to serve the new Comms Room. Regrettably, this plant was omitted from the original planning application submission.
- 2.3 The following drawings are enclosed in support of the planning application:-
  - i. Drawing No: 24 BW LG GA 135 01 Rev B - As Approved by Planning Permission 2011/1243/P - Lower Ground Floor Plan.
  - ii. Drawing No: 24 BW/XX/EL/135/05 Rev A – As Approved by Planning Permission 2011/1243/P – Building Elevation 5 & 6.
  - iii. Drawing No: 24BWLGGGA13501 Rev G - Proposed Lower Ground Floor Plan.
  - iv. Drawing No: 24BW/XX/EL/135/05 Rev B - Proposed Building Elevation 5 & 6.

- v. Extracts from the Engineering Data Book for Databook 4 Series Condensing Units confirming the dimensions of the proposed condenser unit and sound characteristics (NC Curve).

2.4 A more detailed description of the proposal is provided in Section 6 of this Statement.

### **3.0 Site Context**

3.1 The application site is located on the north side of Bloomsbury Way, just west of Bloomsbury Square, and adjacent to Bury Place. It comprises a four-storey office building with additional mansard roof level which was built in the early 1980s (Ref: PP31782/R2).

3.2 The building is not listed however it adjoins 23 Bloomsbury Way (which in turn adjoins 5 & 6 Bloomsbury Square – the corner block), which is a Grade II listed building designed by Henry Flitcroft in 1744.

3.3 The building lies within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area which is characterised by a mixture of historic 18<sup>th</sup> century Georgian four and five storey buildings. The surrounding area is predominantly made up of office buildings, while on the adjoining streets retail units often feature at ground floor, with residential uses above..

### **4.0 Planning History**

4.1 The most recent planning permission (2011/1243/P) for the property was granted on 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2011 for the installation of roof level plant within an acoustic enclosure and the replacement of all windows from aluminium to crittal framed double glazed windows of offices (Class B1a). The planning permission was subject to four conditions. Of relevance to this planning application is Condition 4 which stated that:

*“Noise levels at a point 1 metre external to sensitive facades shall be at least 5dB(A) less than the existing background measurement (LA90), expressed in dB(A) when all plant/equipment (or any part of it) is in operation unless the plant/equipment hereby permitted will have a noise that has a distinguishable, discrete continuous note (whine, hiss, screech, hum) and/or if there are distinct impulses (bangs, clicks, clatters, thumps), then the noise levels from that piece of plant/equipment at any sensitive façade shall be at least 10dB(A) below the LA90, expressed in dB(A).*

*Reason: To safeguard the amenities of the adjoining premises and the area generally in accordance with the requirements of policy CS5 (Managing the impact of growth and development) of the London Borough of Camden Local Development Framework Core Strategy and policies DP26 (Managing the impact of development on occupiers and neighbours) and DP28 (Noise and vibration) of the London Borough of Camden Local Development Framework Development Policies”.*

4.2 This scheme of works has been implemented alongside the refurbishment of the existing office floor space which required updating.

## 5.0 Planning Policy

- 5.1 The statutory development plan is the Adopted Camden LDF Core Strategy and Development Policies which sets out the vision, objectives, and detailed spatial strategy for future development in the Borough up until 2025.
- 5.2 Policy CS14 concerns the promotion of high quality places and the conservation of our heritage, and confirms that the Council will ensure that Camden's places and buildings are attractive, safe and easy to use, subject to meeting a number of criteria that require development to be of a high standard of design that respects local context and character and preserves and enhances heritage assets.
- 5.3 Policy DP24 seeks to secure high quality design, and confirms that the Council will require all developments, including alterations and extensions to existing buildings to be of the highest standard of design this includes the appropriate location for building services equipment.
- 5.4 Policy DP25 deals with conserving Camden's heritage, and confirms that in order to maintain the character of Camden's Conservation Areas, the Council will only permit development that preserves and enhances the character and appearance of the area.
- 5.5 Policy DP26 sets out the Council's approach to managing the impact of development on occupiers and neighbours and confirms that they will protect the quality of life by only granting permission for development that does not cause harm to amenity. The factors include noise and vibration levels.
- 5.6 Finally, Policy DP28 confirms that the Council will seek to ensure that noise and vibration is controlled and managed and will not grant planning permission for:
- a. Development likely to generate noise pollution; or
  - b. Development sensitive to noise in locations with noise pollution, unless appropriate attenuation measures are provided.

Development that exceeds Camden's Noise and Vibration Thresholds will not be permitted.

- 5.7 The Camden Planning Guidance which was adopted in 2011 is also relevant. Paragraphs 11.6 and 11.7 of Chapter 11 confirm that:

*"In refurbished development, plant and machinery should be accommodated within the building structure, or incorporated into the design of external modifications.*

*Other design considerations for building services equipment include:*

- *screening or other techniques to minimise the impacts of plant, machinery and ducting must, in themselves, not cause visual blight;*
- *plant and machinery on roofs should not be visible from the street, public vantage points or from immediately adjacent buildings;*

- *The design and materials used for plant, machinery and ducting, as well as for ancillary structures such as screening, where located on the exterior of the building, must be consistent with those of the building; and*
- *Where possible, plant and machinery should be designed in such a way that does not lead to issues of safety and security”.*

5.8 Paragraph 11.8 considers amenity and confirms that where ducting, plant or machinery are required on the outside of a building they must not obscure access to daylight and sunlight, or provide any nuisance for occupants of the development or adjacent buildings.

## 6.0 Design and Access Principles

6.1 The proposal has been considered alongside the following design and access considerations:-

6.2 **Use:** The application proposal is for the installation of a small condenser unit sited in the lower ground floor alley of the building to serve the adjacent Comms Room.

6.3 **Amount:** The application is for a single condenser unit.

6.4 **Layout:** It is proposed to site the unit on the external wall of the building adjacent to the Comms Road, which is at lower ground floor.

6.5 **Scale:** The dimensions for the unit are as follows: length 900mm x width 320mm x height 890mm. The unit has been sized by a mechanical engineer to suit the requirements of the new Comms Room.

6.6 **Landscaping:** There is no landscaping associated with the application.

6.7 **Parking:** The parking arrangements for the property will remain unchanged.

6.8 **Appearance:** The technical specification submitted with the application shows the appearance of the unit.

6.9 **Access:** The existing access arrangements to the lower ground floor alley will remain unaltered.

## 7.0 Planning Assessment

7.1 The main planning consideration to be taken into account in determining this application is the potential impact of the condenser unit on the amenity of neighbouring properties. The impact on the setting of the Conservation Area is also a consideration.

7.2 **Noise Impact:** An Environmental Noise Report accompanies the planning application and provides a predicted noise level for the new condenser unit at 1 metre to the nearest sensitive façade to meet Policy DP28.

7.3 Cundall's Acoustic Assessment states that:-

*“It is understood that the nearest noise sensitive receptor to the proposed unit will be residential dwellings overlooking the light well at 2<sup>nd</sup> floor level. The distance between the proposed unit and nearest window is approximately 6 m. It is also noted that the noise source (fan) is horizontal (i.e. the source of noise is perpendicular to the direction of the nearest noise sensitive receiver. A correction of -3 dB has therefore been applied to take this into account.*

*The calculated noise impact from the unit at the nearest noise sensitive window is therefore 29 dB(A) [Noise at NSR = 48 - (20.log<sub>10</sub>(6/1) - 3]*

*The lowest measured background noise level of 38 dB(A), the contribution from the proposed unit would increase the background noise level to 38.5 dB(A). Based on the measured noise data, this would result in the existing background noise being exceeded by up to 0.5 dB on 2 occasions”.*

- 7.4 The condenser unit has been designed to ensure that it will have no adverse impact on adjoining occupiers and the accompanying background Noise Assessment illustrates that there will be no detrimental impact upon amenity.
- 7.5 **Conservation Area:** The proposed installation of plant will not be visible from pavement level along Bloomsbury Way, and will not impact upon the character of the building or the setting of the Conservation Area.

## 8.0 Conclusions

- 8.1 This Design and Access Statement has been prepared in support of the installation of a condenser unit sited in the lower ground floor alley, fixed to the external wall, serving the new Comms Room at 24 Bloomsbury Way which has been completed as part of the refurbishment of the building.
- 8.2 The proposal has been assessed alongside the key considerations confirmed in the LDF Core Strategy and Development Policies. This minor application scheme is compliant with the relevant policy context, as confirmed below.
- ✓ The predicted noise level from the condenser unit combined with the plant at roof level will not cause harm to neighbouring residential amenity. The proposal meets the requirements of Policies DP26 and DP28. This application should be read alongside the findings contained in Cundall's Noise Report.
  - ✓ Visually, the condenser unit will not be visible from pavement level, or from any public vantage points or immediately adjoining buildings.
  - ✓ This minor external modification will not harm the form, scale, materials or appearance of the building, and neither will it impact on the setting of the adjacent listed building and the Conservation Area as a whole.
- 8.3 Taking into account this assessment and all relevant planning matters, we trust that Camden Council is able to support this minor proposal to install the condenser unit.