

Delegated Report		Analysis sheet	Expiry Date:	09/05/2012
		N/A / attached	Consultation Expiry Date:	9/4/2012
Officer			Application Number(s)	
Hugh Miller			2012/1434/P	
Application Address			Drawing Numbers	
63 Lincoln's Inn Fields London WC2A 3JX			Refer to draft decision notice	
PO 3/4	Area Team Signature	C&UD	Authorised Officer Signature	
Proposal(s)				
Erection of a glazed enclosure to the entrance of existing offices (Class B1).				
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	02	No. of responses	01	No. of objections	01
Summary of consultation responses:	<p>Advertised in local press – Ham & High 29/3/2012, expires 19/4/2012. Site Notice 20/3/2012, expires 10/4/2012. No response at the time of writing.</p>					
CAAC/Local groups* comments: *Please Specify	<p><u>Bloomsbury CAAC</u>: Objection.</p> <p>This is a totally stone façade; a glass box on the front would introduce a clash of materials. It would also introduce a projection from the long line of flat facades.</p> <p><u>The Friends of Lincoln's Inn Fields (FLIF)</u> – Objection NB. (<i>This objection was forward by Councillor Olad – Ward Councillor</i>)</p> <p>“A friend of Lincoln’s Inn Fields welcomes (Royal College of Radiologists) to LIF.</p> <p>We met with the RCR representatives before Christmas on site. We looked at their plans and discussed their proposed change to the approved scheme.</p> <p>Unfortunately we were unable to support, indeed firmly oppose, the proposed change to the approved scheme. We have not yet been consulted on the application submitted in March. Unless it is significantly different from what we were shown (in which case we would like an opportunity to comment) FLIF’s position is that The plans show an incongruous modern glass extension projecting forward in the centre of the building. It is discordant and would damage the West frontage of LIF.</p> <p>RCR forward a weak functional justification—the need for better circulation in the entrance area—this was in our view weak as there is inside the building a modern glass, non structural wall which could be removed (but is to be replaced) which would improve circulation more than the proposed extension. The details were not provided even though it was intended to make a full application. It would look like a naff hotel ‘celeb’ entrance. We nonetheless look forward to the arrival of, and working with, RCR in LIF, whose original plans will, in our view, work well. We would be grateful if this letter could be passed on to the planning department”.</p>					

Site Description

A basement 7-storey terraced office building located on the west side of Lincoln's Inn Fields opposite Lincoln's Inn Fields; lies due south of Remnant Street and due north of Sardinia Street. The building is currently vacant; and is within Bloomsbury Conservation Area. The building is not listed but it shares common boundaries with nos.61-62 and no.64 which are grade II listed buildings. The host building is identified as a positive contributor to the character and appearance of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area.

Relevant History

2011/1274/P - Installation of replacement windows on front and rear elevations; installation of new plant at roof level; re-configuration of forecourt area with new level surface and removal of car parking spaces to include new disabled access ramp, fire escape staircase, front entrance steps, cycle stands, forecourt rooflights and wall enclosures plus glazed rooflights over existing lightwells at rear, in association with enlargement of basement level under forecourt for B1 office use; replacement metal railings to front boundary. Granted 10/06/2011.

Relevant policies

LDF Core Strategy

- CS1 – Distribution of growth
- CS5 – Managing the impact of growth and development
- CS9 - Achieving a successful Central London
- CS14 – Promoting high quality places and conserving our heritage

Development Policies

- DP24 – Securing high quality design
- DP25 - Conserving Camden's heritage
- DP26 - Managing the impact of development on occupiers and neighbours

CPG 2011

- CPG1 – Design – Ch1, 2, 4.

Bloomsbury Conservation Area Appraisal & Management Strategy

NPPF 2012.

Assessment

Situation

In June 2011, planning permission was granted for refurbishment works including the installation of replacement windows on front and rear elevations; installation of new plant at roof level; re-configuration of forecourt area with new level surface and removal of car parking spaces to include new disabled access ramp, fire escape staircase, front entrance steps, cycle stands, forecourt rooflights and wall enclosures plus glazed rooflights over existing lightwells at rear, in association with enlargement of basement level under forecourt for B1 office use; replacement metal railings to front boundary.

Proposal

- Erection of a glazed enclosure to the entrance of existing offices (Class B1).

The proposed glazed lobby area has dimensions of 2.3m depth x 3.2m width x 3.4m height. It would abut the front elevation of the host building. The lobby is described in the DAS as *“The design proposes a minimal, frameless glazed enclosure and door. The lightweight appearance to the glazed porch is achieved as there is no requirement for fire rating to the glazed porch as there is a minimal need for steel framing. Support to the glazing is provided by fixing a channel back to the existing buildings’ main concrete structure forming a perimeter to the glass structure. The channels are hidden by the existing stone cladding and joints are silicone sealed. The base detail involves a clamping detail set into the paving with nom. 100mm anodised trims and nom. 100mm kickplates at the doors to allow locking mechanism. All fixings, patch fittings and /or ironmongery will be anodised in dark bronze to match the window finish and more closely relate to the historic building. Internally, Dormer Manet fixings will be used as corner posts and glass pieces will be bonded together for support to minimise visual clutter. There is a requirement for manifestation and this will be sensitively accommodated with a minimalist pattern”*.

Despite the intention of the applicant outlined above, concerns are raised in respect of the proposed design and impact on the building/ wider area:

- The front façade is well composed and fully resolved with a repetitive tripartite fenestration with arched heads and hood mouldings. In the context of the north -west corner of Lincoln’s Inn Fields it is rather unusual and contrasts from the largely Georgian building stock. Moreover, it is identified in the CAS to make a positive contribution to the conservation area.
- It is considered that the proposed glass lobby would constitute visual clutter to the buildings façade and would have a rather “tacked on” incongruous appearance which would be harmful to the character and appearance of Bloomsbury Conservation Area. Entrance porches are not a common feature of this part of Lincoln’s Inn Fields and where they do exist they are integral features of the original design of the building, not an incongruous add on.
- The host building has a substantial floor area that was enlarged in a recent approved scheme (see relevant history) and it is inconceivable that the equivalent proposed lobby floorspace cannot be provided internally given the additional lower/ basement floorspace. The suggestion that the external lobby would be advantageous to the applicant in terms of improved security, being beneficial to the less able persons or reduce light pollution is considered insufficient justification for the proposed lobby extension.
- It could not be argued that the works constituted substantial harm to the conservation area but they would be “less than substantial” harm. In paragraph 134 of the NPPF it states that such works must be weighed against the public benefits of the proposals; however in this case there does not appear to be any sufficient public benefit to outweigh the already identified harm.
- It is intimated in the proposals that the proposed entrance lobby will be virtually invisible. Whilst basic construction details have been submitted in the supporting documents nothing

substantive has been provided as to how it will be constructed. It is considered to be questionable whether the design has been fully resolved as no gutter has been provided and with a lean-to roof this would cause rainwater to run onto people passing through the outer doors. Some sort of flashing and sealant will be required where the structure abuts the property, which would be particularly intrusive above the arched head of the door and the sill course of the first floor. The lightweight appearance shown is also considered to be somewhat misleading as some sort of manifestation will undoubtedly be required for the visually impaired. The statement that the manifestation will be sensitively treated is insufficient grounds to conclude its suitability without supporting information. Internalising what is an outdoor space also provides the opportunity for this space to hoard paraphernalia such as pot plants or similar to be stored in this area, thus drawing attention to the feature and thus eroding the suggested lightweight appearance.

The proposal is not considered to be in keeping with LDF policy as set out below; in particular Paragraph 24.7 of LDF Policy DP24 states that development should consider:

- The character and constraints of its site;
- the prevailing pattern, density and scale of surrounding development;
- the impact on existing rhythms, symmetries and uniformities in the townscape;
- the composition of elevations;
- the suitability of the proposed design to its intended use;
- its contribution to public realm, and its impact on views and vistas; and
- the wider historic environment and buildings, spaces and features of local historic value.

Respecting local character

Para. 24.12 states that: “... alterations and extensions, should respect the character and appearance of the local area and neighbouring buildings. Within areas of distinctive character, development should reinforce those elements which create the character. Where townscape is particularly uniform attention should be paid to responding closely to the prevailing scale, form and proportions and materials”.

Para. 24.13 states that: “Development should not undermine any existing uniformity of a street or ignore patterns or groupings of buildings. Past alterations or extensions to surrounding properties should not necessarily be regarded as a precedent for subsequent proposals for alterations and extensions”.

Contributing to the street frontage

Paragraph 24.17 states “Buildings should be visually interesting at street level, with entrances and windows used to create active frontages, which allow overlooking of public areas, provide a sense of vitality and contribute to making Camden a safer place (see Core Strategy policy CS17). Ground floors should be occupied by active uses and should not turn their back on streets and other public spaces”.

In conclusion, the justification set out in the DAS for the glass lobby extension; does not outweigh its incongruous impact on the appearance of the host building and the harm it cause to the wider conservation area. It is recommended that the proposal is refused.

Amenity

The proposed works are considered unlikely to result in a loss of amenity to neighbouring and nearby occupiers. This is in terms of matters such as sunlight/daylight, overlooking, outlook or noise and disturbance.

Recommendation Refuse.

Disclaimer

This is an internet copy for information purposes. If you require a copy of the signed original please telephone Contact Camden on (020) 7974 4444