

Delegated Report (Members Briefing)		Analysis sheet		Expiry Date:		03/05/2012	
		N/A / attached		Consultation Expiry Date:		12/04/2012	
Officer				Application Number(s)			
Jonathan Markwell				2012/1176/P			
Application Address				Drawing Numbers			
20-23 Lincoln's Inn Fields London WC2A 3ED				Please see decision notice			
PO 3/4	Area Team Signature	C&UD	Authorised Officer Signature				
Proposal(s)							
Change of use of ancillary plant room to office building (Class B1) to residential (Class C3) to create 1x1 bed self-contained flat at roof level, with associated single storey extension at roof level, provision of external terrace, reconfiguration of existing external staircase and associated works.							
Recommendation(s):		Grant Planning Permission Subject to a Section 106 Legal Agreement					
Application Type:		Full Planning Permission					
Conditions or Reasons for Refusal:		Refer to Draft Decision Notice					
Informatives:							
Consultations							
Adjoining Occupiers:		No. notified	16	No. of responses	00	No. of objections	00
				No. Electronic	00		
Summary of consultation responses:		A site notice was erected on 14/03/2012, expiring on 04/04/2012. A press notice was published on 22/03/2012, expiring on 12/04/2012. No responses have been received.					
CAAC/Local groups* comments: *Please Specify		<p>Bloomsbury CAAC was formally consulted and objects as follows: "the proposed extension would alter the roof profile and increase the bulk of one of the tallest buildings fronting Lincoln's Inn Fields. The impact views are very partial and for instance one has <u>NOT</u> been provided standing at the southern side of the space looking north where it will be very obtrusive. In addition where will the existing plant go? At night it would be highly visible when the large windows are illuminated and this application should be refused for negative impact on CA!"</p> <p>Officer response: Please see section 4 for design considerations; please see paragraph 5.2 for amenity considerations. The applicant has clarified that the plant space to be lost is now redundant, following a number of plant related applications at the site (see relevant history section below)</p>					
Site Description							
The site is located on the north side of Lincoln's Inn Fields and comprises a mid-terrace seven storey building with basement accommodation that is occupied by commercial premises (Class B1). The upper most floor comprises a mansard extension.							
The site is bounded by Lincoln's Inn Fields to the south and Whetstone Park to the north. Adjacent to the site is the							

Lincoln's Inn Fields public open space which has been designated as a Garden of Special Historic Interest by English Heritage. Adjoining the site to the west is No. 19 Lincoln's Inn Fields, which is a Grade II Listed building and to the east lies a group of Grade II Listed Buildings (nos. 24-27 consecutively) Lincoln's Inn Fields. The building is not listed however the site is within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area. Within the Conservation Area Appraisal the building is identified as making a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area. Within sub area nine the CAA denotes at paragraph 5.143 that "the sub area is characterised by a series of views across the open spaces to surrounding buildings". Paragraph 5.149 provides more details on the host building, stating "the interwar example of Nos 20-23 and 29 have well detailed decorative stone facades; Nos 20-23 dates from 1936-7 and was designed by Wimperis Simpson and Guthrie with W Curtis Green".

Relevant History

10812 - Extension of lift motor room for standby generator, new cooling tower and extract fan on roof of 20, Lincolns Inn Fields, W.C.2. Granted 13/05/1971.

2006/5469/P - Installation of enclosure for new electrical transformer in the front east lightwell of existing office building (Class B1) and installation of new gate providing access from ground floor to basement area. Withdrawn 26/11/2007.

2010/1477/P - Installation of a new air conditioning plant with acoustic louvres at roof level and the replacement of windows at ground levels and levels 3, 5 and 6 of 6 storey building (Class B1). Withdrawn 08/06/2010.

2010/3574/P - Installation of EDF Sub Station and LV Switch Room in pavement vaults at basement level of office building (Class B1) and associated steel doors. Granted 07/09/2010.

2010/5433/P - Replacement of Crittal metal frame windows with aluminium double glazed framed windows at rear and side elevations at ground, third, fifth and sixth floor levels, of the office building. Granted 08/12/2010.

2010/5558/P - Alterations to increase height of entrance landing stone wall and railings at front elevation of existing office. Granted 09/12/2010.

2010/5977/P - Installation of new roof plant condenser units enclosed within acoustic screen in north-west corner of roof level and two new condenser units on east side of roof. Granted 21/12/2010.

2011/5195/P - Retention of an air handling unit to west side roof level, 7 x air condensing units to north west corner within enclosed screen and 4 x condensing units to south east corner roof level. Granted 30/11/2011.

Relevant policies

LDF Core Strategy and Development Policies

CS1 (Distribution of growth),
CS3 (Other highly accessible areas),
CS5 (Managing the impact of growth and development),
CS6 (Providing quality homes),
CS8 (Promoting a successful and inclusive Camden economy),
CS9 (Achieving a successful Central London),
CS11 (Promoting sustainable and efficient travel),
CS13 (Tackling climate change through promoting higher environmental standards),
CS14 (Promoting high quality places and conserving our heritage),
CS15 (Protecting and improving our parks and open spaces and encouraging biodiversity),
CS18 (Dealing with our waste and encouraging recycling),
CS19 (Delivering and monitoring the Core Strategy),
DP2 (Making full use of Camden's capacity for housing),
DP5 (Homes of different sizes),
DP6 (Lifetime homes and wheelchair housing),
DP13 (Employment sites and premises),
DP16 (The transport implications of development),
DP17 (Walking, cycling and public transport),
DP18 (Parking standards and limiting the availability of car parking),
DP20 (Movement of goods and materials),
DP22 (Promoting sustainable design and 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),
DP32 (Air quality and Camden's Clear Zone).

Camden Planning Guidance 2011

Bloomsbury Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy Adopted 18 April 2011

London Plan 2011

NPPF

Assessment

1. Introduction

1.1 Planning permission is sought for the change of use of an ancillary plant room to an office building (Class B1) to residential (Class C3) to create 1x1 bed self-contained flat at roof level. This involves an associated single storey extension at roof level including three doors/windows on the south elevation (facing towards Lincoln's Inn Fields), the provision of an external terrace (enclosed by 1.1m frameless glass balustrade), a rooflight and the reconfiguration of an existing external emergency escape staircase (predominantly on the east elevation). The proposals also indicate that an existing unsightly balustrade at the front of the rooftop south elevation will be removed.

1.2 In practice future occupiers will enter the office building (which has 24 hour security staff) and enter the residential unit at sixth floor level, with a staircase providing access to the 1 bed flat at seventh floor level.

1.3 During the course of the application the proposals have been amended to increase the size of the proposed bedroom within the residential unit.

2. Land use

2.1 The lawful use of the part of the building which relates to this application is in its strictest terms Class B1, as a plant room which is ancillary to the main office use at the site. However in practice at no point in time has this space been used for office accommodation. Nevertheless policies CS7 and DP13 are applicable. Owing to the small floorplate at this part of the building it is considered that it is unsuitable as office accommodation (in the context of the nature of accommodation seen elsewhere at the building) and thus change of use is considered appropriate in principle. Policies CS6 and DP2 seek to maximise the supply of homes in the borough, with housing regarded as the priority land use of the LDF. Policy CS9 also seeks to achieve a successful Central London by being a focus for a range of uses, including residential accommodation as proposed. As a result the principle of providing residential accommodation at the site is considered to be appropriate in principle.

2.2 In terms of the mix of the unit, a 1 bed unit is proposed. Owing to the physical constraints of the site and design/conservation area considerations there is not considered to be sufficient space for a 2 bed unit, for which there is the highest demand in the market housing sector. Given this context and the proposals only involving the creation of a single unit, the provision of a 1 bed unit is considered to be appropriate in this instance.

3. Quality of residential amenity

3.1 The proposed residential unit comprises a one bed, two person unit. In respect of overall flat and bedroom size standards the proposal is compliant with LDF, CPG and London Plan guidance, being 58sqm in overall size and including a bedroom (following revisions during the course of the application) 11.2sqm in size. Moreover, the unit is regular in size and shape, with adequate outlook, natural turning spaces, ventilation and floor to ceiling heights. An external terrace area is also provided, as is emergency escape access through an externally located staircase. Thus it is considered that future occupiers will experience a good standard of accommodation.

3.2 In respect of Lifetime homes, the applicant has submitted a supporting statement outlining where the proposed scheme can and can not meet the 16 standards. Owing to the physical constraints of the site, which involves the conversion of space at rooftop level, it is acknowledged that not all standards will be able to be adhered to. However the applicant has demonstrated areas in which the standards will be able to be met and this is welcomed in principle and considered to be appropriate for this proposal. A condition will specify that the standards shown to be incorporated will be implemented when the scheme is constructed.

3.3 The applicant has also submitted an acoustic report detailing an ambient noise survey, conducted within the confines of the proposed C3 unit, to demonstrate the noise implications on the future occupiers from the surrounding plant already located at roof level. The report has been considered by the Council's specialist environmental health officers, who have confirmed that the readings measured indicate that the existing ambient (internal) noise levels are 1dBA above the noise criteria, as stipulated in the BS8233 for 'good to reasonable standards'. The assessment was carried out with nearby plant in operation. In general terms it is considered that the average noise levels satisfy the British Standard for good to reasonable noise levels. However, to ensure that future occupiers are not harmed by the noise from the existing plant at roof level it is recommended for a condition to be secured stipulating that details of insulation, including details of window glazing, are provided and approved by the Council. This safeguard will seek to ensure that the future occupier(s) of the unit are not harmed by nearby plant at rooftop level.

3.4 In terms of access to the building the applicant has confirmed that the building has 24 hour security staff, meaning that potential conflicts with office occupiers are likely to be minimal. It is intended that future occupiers will access the site via the main office entrance and have access to the multiple lifts to the upper floors of the building. It was seen during the officer site visit that each floor has electronically based access outside of the lift area, meaning future occupiers will not have access to the floors of office accommodation at the site and vice versa. Thus conflicts with existing office occupiers and security issues are not considered to arise from the proposed development.

4. Design

4.1 In respect of design matters, the majority of the existing rooftop building will remain unaltered externally as a result of the proposed works. Only part of the existing south elevation is proposed to be replaced, with the current 0.65m recess along part of this elevation being removed. Thus an extension totalling 0.65m in depth and 6.5m in width is proposed, to align the south elevation of the rooftop structure. Such an extension is considered to be minor in nature and would not add any appreciable bulk to the building when seen in short or long views from various viewpoints in and around Lincoln's Inn Fields. The proposed materials comprise natural slate to match the existing which is considered appropriate.

4.2 Other external alterations include the provision of two doors and a sliding set of doors on the south elevation to provide access to a small external terrace, which will be enclosed by a frameless glass balustrade 1.1m in height. The proposed materials will match those existing on the building, with the frameless glass balustrade reducing the visual impact of this element and marking an improvement to the metal balustrade around the building which is proposed to be removed. Furthermore a new rooflight is proposed, but this is centrally located to reduce its visibility from the public realm. Finally the altered emergency escape staircase will follow the design of the existing staircase.

4.3 In overall terms it is considered that the proposals will preserve the character and appearance of the conservation area. In addition, the removal of the existing balustrade around the building will enhance the character and appearance of the building and thus also the conservation area at this point.

5. Amenity

5.1 In terms of overlooking / loss of privacy, outlook / sense of enclosure and sunlight / daylight matters the proposals are not considered to have an adverse impact on nearby occupiers of residential or commercial premises. This is owing to the relatively modest physical alterations to the building to enable residential accommodation to be provided at this point. With specific reference to the altered emergency escape staircase, this is being altered in order to provide a suitable means of escape for future occupiers. The location follows and extends the existing pattern on the side of the building and thus no significant amenity impacts are envisaged.

5.2 Turning to specific artificial light level matters, as raised by the local group in objecting to the proposals, it is considered that the inclusion of three relatively small windows/doors on the south elevation, which are set back 7.65m from the front edge of the elevation of the building, would not lead to a level of light spillage which would be detrimental to local amenity or the character and appearance of the conservation area. This is considered on the basis of either individually or collectively in terms of the possible light pollution from the seven storeys of office accommodation below. The increase in light pollution is considered to be negligible when viewed from the south side of Lincoln's Inn Fields. Although it is acknowledged that the application site building is greater in height than the majority of buildings along the north side of Lincoln's Inn Fields, the set back of the area where the residential unit is proposed is considered to reduce any harmful impact.

5.3 In respect of noise and disturbance matters, the applicant is seeking to introduce a 9m wide and 1.7m in depth roof terrace in front of the proposed residential accommodation. The limited depth of the terrace results in it being considered that the noise and disturbance to nearby occupiers will be limited and not of a level which would cause undue disturbance in largely commercial surroundings. However a condition is recommended to be added limiting the roof terrace to only the area shown on the plans submitted. This will seek to ensure that future occupiers do not in practice use a larger area of the roof as a terrace, which could give rise to noise and disturbance concerns.

6. Transport

6.1 The application site has a Public Transport Accessibility Level of (PTAL) of 6b (excellent) and is within a "Clear Zone Region", meaning the whole surrounding area is considered to suffer from parking stress. Furthermore, the site is located within a Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ) where more permits have been allocated than spaces available. Given this context the residential unit being created is to be made car-free. If this requirement is not implemented the development would increase demand for on-street parking in the CPZ. The car-free development will be secured by a Section 106 Agreement. The applicant has indicated a willingness to enter into this legal agreement.

6.2 Regarding cycle standards, 1 storage / parking space is required for the residential unit proposed. It was seen during the officer site visit that there are existing cycle storage spaces on site at the Lincoln's Inn Fields frontage. It is considered that the existing facility will be sufficient for the proposed residential unit created.

6.3 Given the relatively minor nature of the works required to implement the scheme, it is considered that a construction management plan is not necessary in this instance.

7. Other matters

7.1 Waste and recycling - In line with CS18 and DP26 it would normally be expected for the applicant to provide details of waste and recycling storage facilities for the future occupiers of the residential unit proposed. However in this instance, owing to the context of the proposed residential unit being at roof level and the remaining area of the building being solely in office use, it is not considered possible to provide individual dedicated facilities. Instead there is space internally for

waste to be stored and it is considered that the existing arrangements for the office building can be utilised for the proposed residential unit.

7.2 Sustainability - Given that the proposal involves the re-use of existing ancillary office space and is not a new-build proposal, there is no requirement for a code for sustainable homes assessment to be sought or secured as part of the application. However, policies CS13 and DP22 of the LDF seek to ensure that development incorporates green/brown roofs and green walls wherever suitable. In this instance the provision of a residential unit at roof level (within a larger area of roof) presents a reasonable opportunity to provide a green/brown at the site. The applicant has advised that it is not feasible for this to be provided on the area of flat roof above the proposed residential unit. However, there is considered to be scope for this to be provided in the area in front (to the south) of the proposed external terrace area. No details have been provided at this stage; however it is considered that this can be secured via an appropriately worded condition.

7.3 Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) - The proposal will be liable for the Mayor of London's CIL as although the additional floorspace does not exceed 100sqm GIA, one unit of residential accommodation is proposed to be created. Based on the Mayor's CIL charging schedule and the information given on the plans, the charge is likely to be £2900 (58 sqm x £50). This will be collected by Camden after the scheme is implemented and could be subject to surcharges for failure to assume liability, for failure to submit a commencement notice and/or for late payment, and subject to indexation in line with the construction costs index. An informative will be attached advising the applicant of this charge.

8. Recommendation:

8.1 Grant Planning Permission subject to S106 Legal Agreement regarding car-free housing.

DISCLAIMER

Decision route to be decided by nominated members on Monday 30th April 2012. For further information see

<http://www.camden.gov.uk/ccm/navigation/environment/planning-and-built-environment/planning-applications/development-control-members-briefing/>