

<b>Address:</b>	Isis House 64-76 New Oxford Street London WC1A 1EU	
<b>Application Number:</b>	2011/5823/P	<b>Officer:</b> Neil Zaayman
<b>Ward:</b>	Bloomsbury	
<b>Date Received:</b>	14/11/2011	
<p><b>Proposal:</b> Erection of extension at roof level to create a 4th floor level for office use (Class B1) with roof terrace to northern edge and associated screened plant enclosure to roof; recladding the existing building facade and alterations to include new door to east elevation and alteration to existing main entrance to south elevation at ground floor level.</p>		
<p><b>Drawing Numbers:</b> P-EX (03) 001 00; P-EX (03) 009 00; P-EX (03) 010- 00; P-EX (03) 011 00; P-EX (03) 012 00; P-EX (03) 013 00; P-EX (03) 014 00; P-EX (05) 001 00; P-EX (05) 002 00; P-EX (05) 003 00; P-EX (05) 004 00; P-A(03)409 00; P-A(03)410 00; P-A(03)411 00; P-A(03)412 00; P-A(03)413 00; P-A(03)414 00; P-A(03)415 00; P-(04)002 00; P-(04)003 00; P-(05)001 00; P-(05)002 00; P-(05)003 00; P-(05)004 00; Planning Statement by DP9 dated November 2011; Design and Access Statement by Tate Hindle dated November 2011; Daylight and Sunlight Report by Savills dated October 2011; Environmental Noise Report by Cundall dated 21<sup>st</sup> October 2011; Energy Assessment by Cundall dated 8<sup>th</sup> November 2011; Sustainability Statement dated 8<sup>th</sup> November 2011; Pre-Planning Application Report by Tate Hindle dated July 2011; and Floorspace Schedule by Tate Handle dated November 2011.</p>		
<b>RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY: Grant conditional permission subject to S106 agreement</b>		
<b>Applicant:</b>	<b>Agent:</b>	
Artillery Properties Ltd C/o agent	DP9 100 Pall Mall LONDON SW1Y 5NQ	

## ANALYSIS INFORMATION

Land Use Details:			
	Use Class	Use Description	Floorspace
Existing	Class A1 - Retail Class B1a Business – Offices		861m <sup>2</sup> 1,328 m <sup>2</sup>
Proposed	Class A1 – Retail Class B1a Business - Offices		861m <sup>2</sup> 1860 m <sup>2</sup>

## OFFICERS' REPORT

**Reason for Referral to Committee: The application involves obligations to be secured by S106 Legal Agreement for matters which do not form part of the agreed scheme of delegation [Clause 3 (vi)].**

## **1.0 SITE**

- 1.1 The application site comprises a 4-storey building located on a prominent corner north of New Oxford Street, between the junction of Bloomsbury Street and Dyott Street. The 1980's building has a reinforced concrete frame structure with dark brick cladding and bands of horizontal glazing. The site is currently in retail use at basement and ground floor level with offices above.
- 1.2 The site is situated within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area and is identified in the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy (2011) as a site which detracts from the character of the conservation area.
- 1.3 The surrounding area is predominantly commercial in character with a mixture of office, retail and residential uses. The townscape is varied, ranging from 4 to 9 storey buildings.
- 1.4 Immediately to the north and adjacent to the site is the Grade II Listed, No. 1, 3 and 5 Bloomsbury Street. To the north of the site is Parnell House, also a Grade II Listed building.

## **2.0 THE PROPOSAL**

- 2.1 The proposal is for external alterations to re-clad the existing building and enhance the main entrance. It would also involve a roof extension to create a 4<sup>th</sup> floor to provide additional office accommodation. There would be associated plant on the roof.
- 2.2 External re-cladding would involve replacing the existing dark brick elevations with full height glazed facades across the office floors. The glazing would comprise fritted glass stripes across the façade to take into account the existing structural columns. The glazing would not be applied on ground floor level. The new glazing would extend from 1<sup>st</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> floor level. The new glass façade would be energy efficient, being double glazed with a high thermal value.
- 2.3 The roof extension would involve removal of the existing enclosed plant room and external plant and duct work. The additional floor would result in the building being a 5-storey development, creating 532sq.m of additional office space. To the Streatham Street elevation would be a new roof terrace.
- 2.4 The new plant would have a single continuous solid panelled plant screen. The plant enclosure would be set on the far western side of the building with a set back of 2.2m from the main façade.
- 2.5 There would be new entrances to the New Oxford Street and Bloomsbury Street elevations. The main office entrance would be on New Oxford Street with a secondary escape on Bloomsbury Street. Both entrances will be replaced with new glazed screens that are to be brought forward, closer to the back of the pavement. The main entrance will have level access.

## **3.0 RELEVANT HISTORY**

- 3.1 No history of specific relevance to this application. Previous planning history on the site:
- 3.1.1 **Ref: 8500610:** Use of part of ground floor and basement as a computer centre involving display sales demonstration servicing and training – **Approved June 1985.**
- 3.1.2 **Ref: P14/3/A/35180:** Redevelopment of the vacant site at 64/76 New Oxford Street and 2/4 Streatham Street by the erection of a basement and 4-storey building for use as offices and shop or restaurant – **Approved July 1983.**

#### 4.0 CONSULTATIONS

- 4.1 A site notice was displayed from 08/12/2011 until 29/12/2011 and the application was advertised in the Ham and High Newspaper on 23/12/2011.

#### 4.2 Bloomsbury Association - Objection:

- The proposal will not enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.
- The architectural expression will make a negative contribution to the existing building.
- The proposal will have a damaging effect on neighbouring listed buildings.
- The public space to the rear has been neglected and should be used more beneficially.
- The building should have an active frontage to Dyott Street and Streatham Street.
- The new top floor should be set back from the main elevation.
- More solidity and articulation would be appropriate.

#### 4.3 Adjoining Occupiers

Original	
Number of letters sent	72
Total number of responses received	6
Number of electronic responses	0
Number in support	0
Number of objections	4

72 Neighbouring occupiers were notified of the application. Six letters of representation were received of which four raised objections in respect of the following:

- No justification for a higher building.
- Glass façade inappropriate.
- Block out light/overshadowing.
- Invasion of privacy.
- Noise pollution and disruption.
- Dust pollution.
- Restrict Access to Streatham Street.
- Security issues for tenants of 1 – 5 Bloomsbury Street.
- There are numerous vacant offices in the vicinity which can be occupied.
- Block TV and satellite signals.
- Disruptions caused during construction.

One letter raised questions in respect of the construction hours and a second letter from the owners of Parnell House requested that planning conditions are attached, should permission be granted.

#### 5.0 POLICIES

## 5.1 The London Plan 2011

## 5.2 LDF Core Strategy and Development Policies

### 5.2.1 Core Strategy

- CS1 (Distribution of growth)
- CS2 (Growth Areas)
- CS5 (Managing the impact of growth and development)
- 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)

### 5.2.2 Development Policies

- DP1 (Mixed use development)
- DP13 (Employment sites and premises)
- DP16 (Transport implications of development)
- DP17 (Walking, cycling and public transport)
- DP 18 (Parking standards and limiting the availability of car parking)
- DP20 (Movement of goods and materials)
- DP21 (Development connecting to the highway network)
- DP 22 (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)
- DP29 (Improving access)
- DP31 provision of, and improvements to, public open space and outdoor sport and recreational facilities.

### 5.3 Supplementary Planning Policies

- Camden Planning Guidance (2011)
- Bloomsbury Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy (April 2011)

## 6.0 ASSESSMENT

### 6.1 Principle of Development

#### 6.1.1 Increase in employment space

The application site is located within Central London and is occupied by retail development at ground floor and offices above. There would be no loss of office/employment floorspace and indeed, the proposal would increase the office floorspace by creating an additional floor. The proposal would therefore be consistent with Policies CS8 and DP13 which encourage the provision of new employment floorspace in this central London location.

#### 6.1.2 Mixed use development

According to LDF policy DP1, the Council will require a mix of uses in development where appropriate in all parts of the Borough. Where more than 200sq.m (gross) additional

floorspace is provided, a contribution towards the supply of housing should be provided. The requirement is to provide 50% of all additional floorspace as housing.

- 6.1.3 Where inclusion of a secondary use is appropriate for the area, but cannot practically be achieved on the site, the Council may accept a contribution to housing elsewhere in the area, or exceptionally a payment-in-lieu.
- 6.1.4 The proposal will provide 481sq.m (GEA) of additional floorspace on the site and is therefore required to provide 240sq.m of housing on-site. The provision of on-site housing is not feasible in this particular case due to various constraints including:
- the character of the area which is mainly commercial with retail at ground floor and offices above;
  - the site fronts onto New Oxford Street which is not ideal for residential development due to quality of amenity, and potential for noise and disturbance;
  - the provision of housing on the site would be incompatible with the existing uses on the site;
  - the retail units occupy the entire ground floor and access and a new core cannot be incorporated for residential development;
  - the existing core serves the offices and cannot be shared with a residential use;
  - the fire staircase serves the offices and cannot be shared with a residential uses.
- 6.1.5 Due to the constraints to provide on-site housing, the applicant has investigated the potential for obtaining a non-residential building for conversion to provide up to 700sq.m of residential floorspace (in excess of the uplift) within proximity the application site. The findings of their report conclude that there are no available or suitable sites in the immediate area for conversion to residential use.
- 6.1.6 In light of the on-site constraints and lack of availability of other sites in the vicinity, it is considered that a payment-in-lieu would be acceptable. A financial contribution of £168,350 should be secured via S106 agreement. The proposed financial contribution has been calculated in accordance with the requirements of Camden Policy Guidance 8 and the development is considered to satisfy the requirements of policy DP1 by providing a payment-in-lieu.

## **6.2 Design and Appearance**

### Height and bulk

- 6.2.1 The existing building is located on the north side of New Oxford Street on the junction with Bloomsbury Street. The building dates from the late 20<sup>th</sup> Century with characteristic dark brown brick. The building is lower in scale than most along New Oxford Street and it has little presence in the street.
- 6.2.2 Should the building be extended in height by an additional floor, its main front elevation would still be lower than the neighbouring buildings to the west at Nos. 78 – 100. Towards the north, the proposal would be one storey higher than the grade II listed Regency Terrace.
- 6.2.3 At present the application site relates poorly to the listed building, it is considered that the proposal would have a much improved and positive relationship with this adjoining building. On the Bloomsbury Street elevations the set back between the main part of the building and the listed terrace would remain and would be simply white rendered with a vertical slot window which would relate to the new glazed façade and stucco finish to the listed terrace.

At the rear the same approach would be taken but with horizontal windows. The flank would be rendered to match. The white rendered break in the façade between the two buildings in conjunction with the use of glass which is lightweight in construction, would prevent the proposal from appearing overly dominant and bulky when viewed against the backdrop of Regency Terrace.

- 6.2.4 The site is surrounded by development higher than the proposed additional floor. As such, the proposal would have no impact on any of the protected London View Corridors.
- 6.2.5 Extending the height by one storey and increasing the perceived height through architectural treatment of the facades is therefore not considered to harm the character and appearance of the area, nor would it be harmful to those buildings immediately surrounding the application site. The proposal complies with policy DP24 in this respect as the development is considered to be sensitive to the character, setting, context and the form and scale of neighbouring buildings. The development also complies with Policy DP25 as it is not considered to cause harm to the setting of the listed building.

#### Façade design and fenestration

- 6.2.6 At present, the building fails to relate to the scale, rhythm and tone of buildings in the immediate area. The proposed changes to the façade would provide an enhancement to the building and the glass would lighten the façade to be more in keeping with the Portland stone, stucco and glass buildings which surround it.
- 6.2.7 It is considered that the fenestration pattern of the glass and the expression of the retained vertical frame seen through the glass would give Isis House greater vertical emphasis. This is more akin to the predominant building stock in the area, which is made up of traditional townhouses/terraces, tall mansion blocks and tall neo-Georgian and modern office blocks.
- 6.2.8 The façade is further broken down to create vertical elements with the use of opaque glazed strips which would help to break down the expanse of glazing and establish a rhythm which picks up on existing facades on the north side of the street, adjacent to the site. Each module is repeated, with slightly different fenestration patterns, throughout the scheme. The variation provides visual interest as well as rhythm and continuity. This is particularly important because the new glazed façade would be on a single plane (flat) and so lacks the visual interest created through depth and shadow found on traditionally constructed buildings found in the immediate vicinity. Subject to use of high quality materials, detailed design and finished appearance, the proposed façade is considered to be appropriate setting, character and appearance of the area and would make a positive contribution in the street scene and conservation area. Materials and a detailed design can be required by means of an appropriate planning condition.
- 6.2.9 The proposal would involve replacement of the existing rooftop plant and equipment. All plant will be housed in a single screened enclosure, set back from the main elevations. Due to the height of the building and location of the plant, this element of the proposal would not be visible from street level. Details of the screening will be detailed with by way of condition
- 6.2.10 The proposed glazed façade is considered to comply with Policy DP24 as the design has considered the quality of materials to be used and would provide a visually interesting frontage.

#### Open space

- 6.2.11 Following concerns raised by the Bloomsbury Association regarding the general neglect of the open space to the rear (Streatham Street elevation) of the site, the applicant agrees that a more appropriate boundary treatment, maintenance and general security of this area is required. Further details can be required by means of a planning condition, should permission be granted.

### **6.3 Impact on Amenity**

#### Noise and disturbance

- 6.3.1 The application site would remain in use as retail at ground floor level with offices above. In this respect, activities on the site would not change significantly, apart from additional office space at the proposed 4<sup>th</sup> floor level.
- 6.3.2 It is not considered that the addition of 532sq.m of office floorspace would result in an increase of activity to a level that would be harmful to neighbouring amenity. The application site is located on a busy junction and in Central London where ambient noise levels are expected to be higher. In addition, office opening times are usually restricted to core business hours and would remain unchanged at the application site.
- 6.3.3 The proposal would involve replacement of the existing roof plant and equipment and in this respect, Policy DP28 sets out the requirements for minimising any undesirable impacts on nearby properties from plant or machinery.
- 6.3.4 The applicant has submitted a noise report based on findings of two surveys carried out. The report indicates that the new plant would have noise levels that are 10dB below the existing background noise levels. Based on the findings of the report, and subject to compliance with appropriate conditions, it is not considered that the new replacement plant and equipment on the roof of the development would not have any harmful impact on the amenities of nearby neighbouring occupiers in terms of noise or disturbance. The proposal therefore complies with Policy DP28 in this respect.

#### Sunlight and daylight

- 6.3.5 Turning to potential loss of light issues to neighbouring properties. The applicant has submitted a Daylight and Sunlight Assessment and findings are centred on the Vertical Sky Component (VSC) criteria. The BRE Guidelines permit a reduction of up to 20% of daylight, which is considered to be unperceptable to surrounding occupants.
- 6.3.6 Parnell House which is on the opposite side of the application site, north of Streatham Street, comprises residential development. The daylight analysis identifies that no reduction exceeds 2.9%, which is well within the permitted 20%. In respect of sunlight, the report demonstrates derogation by a 1% reduction in winter sunlight which is considered to pose no material harmful impact.
- 6.3.7 No. 1 – 5 Bloomsbury Street is located directly east of the site with upper floors comprising residential development. All but four windows exceed the BRE Guidance for the VSC criteria. The four windows in question on 2<sup>nd</sup> floor experience minor daylight derogations by no more than 5%. The report suggests that the rooms affected are served by more than one window and that the daylight reduction would not be more than 20%, complying with the BRE Guidance. In respect of sunlight, the report identifies a number of windows which would experience a reduction in winter sunlight however, the actual quantum reduction would not exceed 9%. These existing rear windows currently have very low values with limited sunlight late in the day. The windows, currently fail the BRE guidance and the

proposal would therefore not cause a significant loss of daylight over and above that which is currently experienced.

- 6.3.8 In light of the above, it is considered that the proposal would comply with the BRE Guidance in terms of sunlight and daylight received by neighbouring properties. It is not considered that the proposal would have any significant harmful impact on the amenities of neighbouring occupiers in this respect, which would justify refusal of the application.

#### Overlooking and privacy

- 6.3.9 The additional floor with office accommodation is not considered to result in any overlooking or invasion of privacy to neighbouring occupiers over and above that which is currently experienced.
- 6.3.10 The development would involve a new roof terrace to the northern side, facing Parnell House. It is not considered that this roof terrace, which will only be used during core office hours, would result in an invasion of privacy or overlooking to the occupiers of Parnell House, which is on the opposite side of Streatham Street and therefore has a sufficient separation distance.

### **6.4 Sustainability Issues**

- 6.4.1 Policy DP22 of the LDF requires developments to incorporate sustainable design and construction measures and that the targets set out in CS13 should be met. Non-domestic developments of 500sq.m or more should achieve BREEAM “very good”.
- 6.4.2 The proposal would involve various sustainable design measures which have been included in the design of the building as well as during the construction phase of the development. The report indicates that a BREEAM rating of “very good” is likely to be achieved on site. It is proposed to secure the incorporation of sustainability measures in the carrying out of the development in its fabric and in its subsequent management and occupation to achieve a BREAM target of at least Very Good via legal agreement.
- 6.4.3 CPG3 advises on minimum standards in respect of the Energy, Water and Materials category. The Sustainability Statement indicates that the proposal will meet the standards for Water and Materials category but will fall slightly below the standard in the Energy category. Subsequently, the Energy Assessment suggests the installation of an air source heat pump to provide an 11.3% reduction in CO2 emissions. The report also suggests that, should the energy efficient measures be incorporated, the development would have energy savings of 40% over and above the existing building and a reduction in CO2 emissions of 42%. In this respect, the proposal is considered acceptable, subject to compliance with conditions and implementation of energy saving and CO2 reduction measures. These measures will be secured via legal agreement

### **6.5 Transport**

- 6.5.1 The application site is located in Central London and has high public transport accessibility. Policy DP18 requires all development in Low Parking Provision Areas, i.e. Central London area, to be car-free. No parking provision has been included for the proposed new office accommodation and this will be secured by means of a Legal Agreement.
- 6.5.2 The impact of traffic movement during the construction phase can be minimised by means of a Construction Management Plan. A Construction Management Plan (CMP) will be secured by means of a legal agreement. The CMP will set out what measures the



applicant will adopt in undertaking the works to the existing building and construction of the Development to ensure no adverse impact on the transport network (and amenity).

6.5.3 Appendix 2 of the Development Policies require developments over 500sq.m to provide 1 cycle space per 250sq.m for staff and a minimum of 2 visitor spaces. The scheme would create an additional 532sq.m of office floorspace and proposes 6 covered cycle stands to the Streatham Street elevation. 3 Spaces would be for staff and 3 for visitors.

6.5.4 It is recommended that a highways contribution for the sum of £25,000 should be secured via legal agreement to secure reinstatement of the footways in the event that they are damaged during construction. A financial contribution for the sum of £30,000 towards environmental, public realm, walking and cycling improvements should also be provided to address the increase in trip rates generated by the development.

## **6.6 Access and servicing**

6.6.1 Access to the site will remain in the same location. All the existing entrances will be provided with level access to comply with disabled access requirements. No changes are proposed to the existing retail units at ground floor level.

6.6.2 All refuse and recycling arrangements will remain as per the existing arrangement. The office and retail units will manage this respectively.

## **6.7 Public Open Space**

6.7.10 Policy DP31 requires on-site provision towards public open space where 500sq.m of floorspace is developed. According to CPG6, the Council may agree to accept financial contributions in place of direct provision of new public open space where the development site is too small to incorporate on-site open space and the densely built up character of Camden prevents direct provision of off-site.

6.7.11 Due to the site constraints, it is considered that a payment-in-lieu of open space provision would be acceptable. The financial contribution for the sum of £2,701 satisfies the requirements of Policy DP31 and CPG6.

## **7.0 CONCLUSION**

7.1 The principle of the development in land use terms is considered acceptable subject to a contribution towards affordable housing within the area. The increase in height and new glazed façade raises no concerns and is not considered to be harmful to the character and appearance of the host building, the adjoining listed buildings or the conservation area. The proposal is acceptable in terms of its impact on neighbouring amenity. It is not considered that any unreasonable levels of harm would occur to a degree which would justify refusal of the application. Subject to compliance and implementation of planning conditions and obligations within the legal agreement, the development is considered acceptable in terms of sustainability. No highway or parking issues are raised.

7.2 Planning Permission is recommended subject to a S106 Legal Agreement covering the following Heads of Terms:-

- Construction Management Plan
- Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Plan
- Sustainability BREEAM Plan
- Affordable Housing Contribution £168,350

- Associated Highways Works £25,000
- Environmental Improvements £30,000
- Public Open Space Contribution £2,701
- Car Free

## 8.0 **LEGAL COMMENTS**

8.1 Members are referred to the note from the Legal Division at the start of the Agenda.