

PLANNING STATEMENT

on behalf of

Generator Hostels

**Tavistock Place
London WC1H 9SE**

December 2011

117 Waterloo Road,
London, SE1 8UL

T 0207 921 0084

F 0207 921 0027

London@boyerplanning.co.uk

www.boyerplanning.co.uk

Contents

1	The Proposals	4
2	Site and Surrounding Area	5
3	Planning History	6
4	Pre-Application Consultation	7
5	Policy Context	8
6	Assessment of Proposals	9
7	Summary and Conclusions	11

This Planning Statement has been prepared on behalf of Generator Hostels in support of its planning application to undertake improvement works to the Generator Hostel on Tavistock Place in Camden. This application follows an earlier submission for a new office development on an adjacent site, which would provide the headquarters for Generator Hostels. That application (ref: 2011/4586/P) is currently being considered by the Council.

This application seeks to improve the existing situation at the Generator Hostel by way of alterations to the main entrance, the night entrance, and the allocated smoking area within the hostel demise. The proposals are largely in response to public consultation and engagement with the local community; the proposal alterations seek to address matters of concern for local residents.

This statement should be read in conjunction with the Design and Access Statement prepared by Orbit Architects and the supporting information that forms part of the application.

1 The Proposals

- 1.1 The application proposals relate to alterations to the existing building and/or arrangements for use of the building to improve the amenity of neighbouring residents. The proposal alterations include the following:
- Alterations to the main entrance to the hostel
 - Alterations to the hostel night entrance
 - Relocation of the 'smoking area'
- 1.2 The existing hostel arrangements include access to the main entrance and the night entrance on the south side of the building. Both access points to the building are open and tend to encourage hostel visitors to linger on the street outside the entrance, particularly in front of the main entrance. The proposals involve alterations to both entrances; enclosing the main entrance to ensure that visitors arriving and leaving the hostel congregate within an internal lobby rather than out on the street. The proposed alterations to the main entrance provide an opportunity to improve disabled access and also offer an opportunity to improve the approach to the building and the public realm immediately adjacent to the entrance. The route to the night entrance would be improved, removing the convoluted access, to ensure that visitors can get access to the building after 10pm in a more efficient manner.
- 1.3 At present the designated smoking area is situated at the western end of the building and is exposed to the neighbouring properties. This application seeks permission to relocate the designated smoking area to the north side of the building within an enclosed low-level space (approximately 4m below ground level), which would be landscaped to reduce the potential noise.
- 1.4 Overall, the development proposals do not seek to increase the hostel capacity or to make alterations to the existing hostel use. However, the proposed alterations to the building entrances and the designated smoking area seek to improve the amenity for neighbouring residents.

2 Site and Surrounding Area

- 2.1 The site is occupied by a Generator Hostels, who have hostel accommodation in London, Dublin, Berlin, Copenhagen, Hamburg and Venice.
- 2.2 The site is situated on the northern side of Tavistock Place and is accessible from Compton Place, which is a narrow accessway from Tavistock Place. The hostel is located within a building known as Macnaghten House and is largely surrounded by residential properties.
- 2.3 The site is within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area.

3 Planning History

- 3.1 There is no relevant planning history in respect of the application site. However, there is an application on the adjacent site, known as the building adjacent to Macnaghten House, Compton Place (rear of 25-31 Tavistock Place, 80-84 Marchmont Street and 5-6 Leigh Street). The application seeks permission for the demolition of the existing building and erection of a three-storey office and light industrial building (Class B1a and B1c).
- 3.2 The proposals for the adjacent site would provide office headquarters for the Generator Hostel Group. It is anticipated that this application will be presented to the Planning Committee in early 2012.

4 Pre-Application Consultation

- 4.1 As a result of the planning application for an office development on the adjacent site it was evident that neighbouring residents have a number of concerns regarding the existing hostel use. Whilst many of these concerns did not relate to the proposals for the office development, Generator Hostel have subsequently attended meetings with residents to understand the issues that arise from the hostel operations. Engagement with the local community has resulted in the submission of this application which seeks to address amenity issues of concern to neighbouring residents.

5 Policy Context

5.1 All planning applications are judged against adopted development plan policies in accordance with Section 38(6) of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. The proposals must, therefore, be considered in light of the planning documents relevant to the site. These are the London Borough of Camden Local Development Framework, and the London Plan.

5.2 Other instruments including national Planning Policy Statements and Guidance Notes, and local instruments such as Supplementary Planning Guidance must also be considered.

Regional Policy Guidance -The London Plan

5.3 The London Plan provides the strategic policy for London and is therefore has limited relevance to this proposal.

5.4 Policy 2.9 (Inner London) sets out that boroughs should work to realise the potential of inner London in ways that sustain and enhance its economic and demographic growth while also improving its district environment, neighbourhoods and public realm, supporting and sustaining existing and new communities, addressing its unique concentrations of deprivation, and improving quality of life and health for those living, working, studying or visiting there.

Local Policy – The Local Development Framework

5.5 Local planning policy comprises the Core Strategy and Development Policies DPDs which were adopted on 8 November 2010 and have now largely replaced the Unitary Development Plan 2006. Relevant local policies are discussed in further in section 6 of this report.

6 Assessment of the Proposals

6.1 *Principle of the development*

6.1.1 The development proposals seek to improve the existing entrances to the hostel building and the general arrangements associated with these access points. In addition, the proposals involve re-locating the designated smoking area to minimise impacts on neighbouring properties.

6.1.2 Whilst there are no specific policies within the Local Development Framework that relate to the principle of the proposals, policy CS5 of the Core Strategy seeks to protect the amenity of Camden's residents and those working in an visiting the borough. Policy CS5 seeks to ensure that mitigation measures are required where necessary to protect the amenity of residents. It should be noted that the existing hostel is the lawful use of this site and operates in a legitimate manner; however, Generator Hostel are seeking to implement improvements to the building to mitigate the impact on amenity of nearby residents. Whilst these measures are not being required by the Council, the principle of the proposals in is accordance with local planning policy.

6.2 *Design and Conservation*

6.2.1 The design details are explained in the Design and Access Statement. The proposals intend to enclosure the main entrance to the building, providing a covered stair and platform lift, directing visitors into an internal lobby. The main entrance proposals incorporate improved planting, new paving and new signage making the route more legible and encouraging visitors to enter the building rather than linger outside.

6.2.2 In accordance with policy CS14 of the Core Strategy and policy DP24 of the of Development Policies Document, the proposals would be a high standard of design, which is appropriate to the scale and character of the existing building and, which provides visual interest. The landscaping proposals would significantly improve the public realm and create a buffer between Macnaghten House and the neighbouring residents in Knollys House.

6.2.3 The proposal to incorporate disabled access within the alterations to the main entrance of the building is in accordance with policy DP29 of the Development Policies Document, which seeks to promote fair access and remove barriers that prevent people from accessing facilities and opportunities.

- 6.2.4 The proposed design of the night entrance would simplify a convoluted route, minimising the stairs and providing a more direct route into the building after 10pm.
- 6.2.5 The proposed relocation of the designated smoking area seeks to minimise the impact on surrounding residents with a low-level, landscaped area which is situated on the northern side of McNaughten House.
- 6.2.6 Each of the alterations proposed seeks to improve the amenity of neighbouring residents; the alterations would be a high quality of design that would also improve the overall quality of the existing building.

6.3 *Amenity*

Residential amenity

- 6.3.1 The purpose of the development proposals is to improve residential amenity. Policy DP26 of the Development Policies Document seeks to protect that the quality of life of occupiers and neighbours by only granting planning permission for development that does not cause harm to amenity. In this case, the existing hostel operates within its lawful use; however, the operators are seeking address concerns of local residents by proposing alterations to the building which would result in improvements to amenity.

Construction impacts

- 6.3.2 The construction phase of any development can have an impact on amenity. In order to ensure the disruption caused by construction is minimised, a Construction Management Plan would be submitted and approved prior to the commencement of development. We anticipate this would be secured by planning condition, and would cover such matters as hours of work, construction-related deliveries and waste removal, and method of construction.

7 Summary and Conclusions

- 7.1.1 Following the submission of an application for office headquarters on the neighbouring site, Generator Hostels are seeking permission to undertake alterations to the hostel facilities at Tavistock Place. Generator Hostels recognise that neighbouring residents have concerns regarding residential amenity and, whilst, the hostel operates within its lawful use, this application seeks to make improvements to the building to minimise its impact on amenity of nearby residents.
- 7.1.2 The proposals are high quality design and would result in improvements to the entrances and public realm, together with the relocation of the designated smoking area to the low-level on the north side of Macnaghten House. Overall, it is considered that the proposals would improve the quality of the building while addressing concerns raised by local residents in terms of amenity.
- 7.1.3 The proposals are considered to comply with planning policy.