

Delegated Report	Analysis sheet	Expiry Date:	30/09/2011
	N/A / attached	Consultation Expiry Date:	06/09/2011

Officer			Application Number(s)
Amanda Peck			2011/3012/P
Application Address			Drawing Numbers
24 Gray's Inn Road London WC1X 8HR			Refer to draft decision notice
PO 3/4	Area Team Signature	C&UD	Authorised Officer Signature

Proposal(s)

Change of use from Office (Class B1) to residential (4 x 1 bedroom units) (Class C3) at first, second, third and fourth floor levels and either A1 (retail), A2 (financial and professional services) or B1 (office) at ground and basement floor levels.

Recommendation(s):	Grant planning permission subject to a S106 legal agreement
Application Type:	Full Planning Permission
Conditions or Reasons for Refusal:	Refer to Draft Decision Notice
Informatives:	

Consultations						
Adjoining Occupiers:	No. notified	15	No. of responses	00	No. of objections	00
			No. electronic	00		
Summary of consultation responses:	No responses received					
CAAC/Local groups* comments: <small>*Please Specify</small>	The site is not within a conservation area.					

Site Description

This application relates to a 5 storey building that was last in use as Class B1 offices. The building is of 19thC origin with well-defined vertical proportions and large dormers within the attic floor. Adjoining buildings comprise modern post war commercial blocks in office use, including a 6 storey block at 30-34 and a part 5 part 9 storey block at 14-22.

The property is located in the Central London area (not within a designated frontage or neighbourhood centre); it is not within a conservation area, although it lies opposite Gray's Inn which has listed buildings and is within the Bloomsbury conservation area.

Relevant History

24-28 Gray's Inn Road

- 2008/2884/P - Erection of a 6 storey building comprising offices (Class B1) at basement, ground and first floor levels (639 sqm) and nine self contained flats (2 x 1 bed, 5 x 2 bed and 2 x 3 bed) at second to fifth floor levels, following demolition of existing building. Granted subject to a S106 17 November 2009

- PSX0205054 - Demolition of existing office building and the erection of a building comprising ground floor and basement as dual class A1/A2 (retail/professional services) use and five upper floors as residential (Class C3) in association with the creation of 6 x 2 bedroom, 2 x 3 bedroom and 1 x 1 bedroom self contained flats. Granted subject to a s106 20 November 2003

24 Gray's Inn Road

- 9501141 - Temporary change of use from B1 (office) use to D1 (language school) Granted 24 August 1995
- 9220025 - Application for a certificate of lawfulness for an existing use of ground first second third and fourth floors as offices Granted 8 April 1993

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
- CS14 - Promoting high quality places and conserving our heritage
- 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
- DP3 – Contributions to the supply of affordable housing
- DP5 – Homes of different sizes
- DP6 – Lifetime homes and wheelchair homes
- DP13 – Employment premises and sites
- DP17 – Walking, cycling and public transport
- DP18 – Parking standards and limiting the availability of car parking
- DP24 – Securing high quality design
- DP25 – Conserving Camden's heritage
- DP26 – Managing the impact of development on occupiers and neighbours

Camden Planning Guidance 2011

Assessment

Proposal

The proposal seeks to gain planning permission for the change of use of from office floorspace to residential to the upper floors (4 x 1 bed units) and either A1 (retail), A2 (financial and professional services) or B1 (office) at basement and ground floor levels. The existing building currently contains approx. 320sqm of B1 office floorspace over six storeys and is currently vacant.

Land use

Principle of the change of use

LDF Policy DP13 has a broad presumption against the loss of employment floorspace where there is potential for that use to continue. It should be acknowledged that this policy is specifically aimed towards larger premises (1000sqm+), which have the ability to be used flexibly within the B1c/B8 use class. Given the limited floorspace and the site's location on a busy main road with no space for servicing it is unlikely that the site is suitable for a range of B1/B2/B8 uses.

CPG 5 (Town Centres, retail and employment) elaborates on policy DP13 and highlights a list of further considerations to be taken into account. This includes that for older office premises or buildings that were originally built as residential dwellings we may allow a change from B1 Office use and that the priority is for the replacement use to be permanent housing or community use. Other considerations are: whether the premises include features required by tenants seeking modern office accommodation; the quality of the premises and whether it is purpose built accommodation; whether there are existing tenants in the building; evidence of demand for office space in this location; and whether the premises provides accommodation for small or medium businesses. CPG5 states that where it is difficult to make an assessment using the list of further considerations then additional

evidence in the form of a marketing assessment may also be required. The applicant has submitted additional information stating that the building has been marketed since February 2010 by Keningtons and Anton Page using a range of methods ('to let' board at the property, marketing details circulated to Estate Agents Clearing House and on relevant and a mail drop to local occupiers). The adjacent properties at 26 and 28 are also being marketed. During this time there has only been one temporary letting to TEFL London who vacated the property on 24 December 2010.

In light of the above it is considered that the proposed change of use is acceptable in the context of Policy DP13.

Proposed residential accommodation2.4

LDF policy DP2 welcomes the creation of residential accommodation where it meets acceptable standards. In terms of the quality of internal living standards, the proposed units will meet the requirements for individual room sizes and total floor area. Furthermore it is considered the proposed units will provide good residential amenity for future occupiers in terms of light and ventilation to habitable rooms and outlook in compliance with the requirements contained in Camden Planning Guidance. It should be noted that there is a 5 storey emergency staircase located close to the rear elevation associated with the adjoining property. Whilst this is an open structure it is of a substantial size and could impact on the windows on the rear elevation in terms of daylight/sunlight. There is an existing extant planning consent for residential units to the upper floors of a new development and these include habitable room windows to the rear elevation in a similar location to those existing. Given that the units are all of a generous size with living rooms located to the front elevation it is considered that any impact on the rear bedroom windows would not be substantial enough to warrant refusal of the scheme.

Policy DP5 (Homes of different sizes) seeks to provide a range of unit sizes to meet demand across the borough. The Dwelling Size Priority Table specifies for private housing the highest priority is 2 bedrooms with a medium property for 1 bedrooms and 3-4 bedrooms. The scheme proposes only 1 bed units and does therefore not comply with policy DP5. The applicant has stated that because of the layout of the property and the fact that this is a conversion it has only been possible to provide 1 x 1 bed unit per floor (each floor is too small to provide 2 bed units). They have explored the potential for 1 x 2 bed unit to the two upper floors but this proved to be an inefficient use of space; a three bed unit could have been provided, but given the site's location on a busy main road with no external amenity space it was considered more appropriate to provide 1 bed units. It is considered that the mix the proposed 4 x 1 bed units are appropriate in this instance.

A lifetime homes assessment has been submitted with the application even though the proposal does not involve any external or internal alterations. It is unlikely that all of the 16 criteria can be met given this is a conversion (it appears that it is not possible to install a lift or chairlift).

The gross external area of the proposal would be approximately 320sqm with 4 units, which is below the threshold for affordable housing. The proposal is therefore below the threshold at which affordable housing would apply.

The proposal includes an internal refuse store at ground floor level internally from the lobby area. Given the constraints of the site with minimal external space it is considered that this refuse area is acceptable.

Amenity

There are no changes to any existing windows and there are no nearby residential windows to the front or rear elevations. There are therefore not considered to be any amenity impacts in terms of overlooking. There are no external works proposed and there are not considered to be any impacts in terms of overshadowing. The change of use proposed is not considered to adversely impact on the amenity enjoyed by nearby occupiers.

Transport

The site is located within the Clear Zone Region and has a PTAL of 6b (excellent) and is located within Controlled Parking Zone CA-D. This CPZ operates between Monday to Friday 8.30am to 6.30pm and suffers from parking stress. The additional residential units would therefore be expected to be designated as car free i.e. future occupants will be unable to obtain on-street parking permits from the Council. These arrangements will need to be secured by means of a Section 106 Agreement.

Camden's Parking Standards for cycles states that 1 storage or parking space is required per residential unit, however for larger residential units (3+ beds), the London plan requires 2 cycle parking spaces per unit. The proposal is for 4 x 1 bed units therefore 4 cycle storage/parking spaces are required. No information has been provided with regard to cycle parking, but there is considered to be sufficient space within each unit given their size and the provision large internal halls and it is considered that this proposal meets Camden's cycle parking standards.

Sustainability

The Council's Sustainability Camden Planning Guidance (2011) states that energy efficiency of existing buildings should make a contribution towards the boroughs reduction in carbon dioxide emissions. As a guide, at least 10% of the project cost should be spent on environmental improvements. No information has been submitted with regards to sustainability, but because of the refurbishment works that would be involved with this conversion it is expected that measures to improve the energy efficiency of the building could be carried out. A condition is therefore recommended requiring the submission of a sustainability statement to indicate energy efficiency measures and what percentage of the project costs these measures would amount to.

Recommendation:

Grant Planning Permission subject to Section 106 agreement.

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