

Delegated Report		Analysis sheet		Expiry Date:	19/12/2011	
		N/A / attached		Consultation Expiry Date:	30/11/2011	
Officer			Application Number(s)			
Eimear Heavey			2011/5498/P & 2011/5518/L			
Application Address			Drawing Numbers			
Arlington House 220 Arlington Road London NW1 8EH			Refer to decision notice			
PO 3/4	Area Team Signature	C&UD	Authorised Officer Signature			
Proposal(s)						
Change of use of south wing at upper ground floor level from ancillary staff offices to 6 x low rent self-contained bedsits, change of existing offices in west wing at upper ground floor level to provide 3 x low cost self contained bedsits and alterations to existing corridor between north and south wing to provide ancillary office and storage facility in connection with existing mixed use building (Sui Generis).						
Recommendation(s):		Grant planning permission subject to S106 legal agreement and listed building consent				
Application Type:		Full Planning Permission and Listed Building Consent				
Conditions or Reasons for Refusal:		Refer to Draft Decision Notice				
Informatives:						
Consultations						
Adjoining Occupiers:	No. notified	208	No. of responses	02	No. of objections	01
			No. electronic	00		
Summary of consultation responses:		An objection was received from the occupants of Flat 4, 251-259 Camden High St who were objecting to the fact that low cost bedsits could result in lowering the security access to their corridor along with potential increase in noise levels. <u>Response:</u> Please see assessment section of report for further comment.				
CAAC/Local groups* comments: <small>*Please Specify</small>		N/A				
Site Description						
This Grade II listed men's lodging house, opened in 1905, was the last of six Rowton Houses that were built across London to house working men. The hostel originally accommodated 1103 men in 985 cubicles and 118 bedrooms. The hostel was well endowed with facilities such as lavatories, a washhouse and lockers, as well as communal areas such as a dining room and smoking room. The building was listed in January 2011 and is situated on the eastern side of Arlington Road between Inverness St and Jamestown Road. It is not located within a conservation area Centre but is within Camden Town Centre.						

Relevant History

2010/0134/P Amendment to existing planning permission (2007/3283/P) Change of use from 400 room hostel to a mixed use (Class sui-generis) comprising: 95 units of supported accommodation and 35 low cost rented units on 1st-5th floors together with market stalls, art gallery, coffee shop and restaurant on the ground floor and basement to be run as a social enterprise in conjunction with the supported residential accommodation to include a new glazed screen, sliding doors and ramped main entrance on the Arlington Road side, replacing the existing stepped entrance of the mixed use building (class Sui Generis). Granted on 12/02/2010.

2007/3283/P Change of use from 400 room hostel to a mixed use (Class sui-generis) comprising: 95 units of supported accommodation and 35 low cost rented units on 1st-5th floors together with market stalls, art gallery, coffee shop and restaurant on the ground floor and basement to be run as a social enterprise in conjunction with the supported residential accommodation. Granted on 01/11/2007.

Relevant policies

LDF Core Strategy and Development Policies

Camden Core Strategy

CS5 – Managing the impact of growth and development

CS6 – Providing quality homes

CS10 – Supporting community facilities and services

CS11 – Promoting sustainable and efficient travel

CS16 – Improving Camden's health and well-being

CS17 – Making Camden a safer place

Camden Development Policies

DP6 Lifetime homes and wheelchair housing

DP8 – Accommodation for homeless people and vulnerable people

DP17 – Walking, cycling and public transport

DP22 – Promoting sustainable design and construction

DP24 – Securing high quality design

DP25 – Conserving Camden's heritage

DP26 – Managing the impact of development on occupiers and neighbours

Camden Planning Guidance 2011

PPS5 – Planning for the Historic Environment

Assessment

Proposal

This application proposes the change of use of south wing at upper ground floor level from ancillary staff offices to 6 x low rent self-contained bedsits, change of existing offices in west wing at upper ground floor level to provide 3 x low cost self contained bedsits and alterations to existing corridor between north and south wing to provide ancillary office and storage facility in connection with existing mixed use building (Sui Generis).

Main planning considerations

- Principle of the change of use
- Design and impact on special character of the listed building;
- Amenity and size of units;
- Transport; and
- Other matters

Principle of the change of use

The proposed change of use of the south and west wings from offices to bedsits is considered to be acceptable in this instance. The south wing is no longer used as offices and is currently used as a lounge and for storage by One Housing Group. The west wing, which comprises an area of approximately 107sq metres is currently used as an office by One Housing Group. Although this space will be lost as office space, the proposal seeks to compensate for this loss by incorporating office space between the north and south wings.

In effect the proposed change of use to bedsits is considered to be acceptable, as all of the office space will be re-provided within the building. Furthermore, given the fact that the priority use of Arlington House is supported residential accommodation, an extension of this use within the building envelope is not contested.

Design and impact on the listed building

It is proposed to insert partitions into the south wing to create 3 units, accessed from a single long corridor. The partitions have been located to take advantage of the large arched windows in the southern elevation, and to align bathrooms with the adjacent small windows that are believed to be a later addition. This does create a rather irregular layout, however it is logical to maximise the benefits of the large windows so as to light living spaces. This layout also avoids any uncomfortable intersection between inserted partitions and glazing. In the west wing the proposed partitions are more regular in their alignment, creating three larger units.

The partitioning of the former open reading room space is considered to cause minor harm to the historic significance of the listed building and policy HE9.4 of PPS 5 is relevant. The space retains few of its original features – exposed glazed tiles, parquet floor, open fireplaces – and has an institutional and utilitarian character with none of the ambience that would have existed originally. Furthermore, the space is likely to have been partitioned in the past, evidenced by the small windows that may have served bathrooms. Policy HE9.4 is clear that local planning authorities should weigh the public benefits for the proposal against the harm. Given the nature of the new accommodation (low cost bedsits) and the minor nature of the harm, the proposal is considered acceptable.

The walls of the spaces in question were originally lined up to dado height with glazed chocolate and cream tiles. However, these have been heavily over painted and have lost their architectural significance. It is proposed to over clad the tiles with insulation and re-plaster the walls above, retaining the moulding detail around the large arched windows. The wall lining will require the extension of the existing timber window cill which is considered acceptable.

New servicing was incorporated into the building as part of the 2009/10 refurbishment - prior to the building's listing. Data, electrical and heating is ceiling mounted and runs throughout the existing spaces. This is unattractive and visually intrusive. The necessary servicing will be relocated to suit the new room layouts and will be concealed within a new suspended ceiling. There is an existing simple cornice within the spaces and ideally historic features of this nature should remain visible. However, given the lack of a suitable floor void for servicing, the modest appearance of the cornice and a number projecting sections of wall that disrupt it along its length, in this case its concealment is considered acceptable. The existing cornice would be retained within the ceiling, which itself would be a reversible intervention, allowing for the cornice to be exposed if desired in the future.

A new bike rack is to be located externally within the service access road, adjacent to the south elevation of the building. There is already a bike rack along this elevation and an additional shelter is not considered to harm the setting of the listed building. The proposed alterations to the listed building are justifiable and would not

unduly harm its special architectural and historic interest.

Amenity

The proposed units will all be contained within the building and as such there are no issues in terms of overlooking or loss of privacy to neighbouring properties. 6 of the units will overlook the service road between Arlington House and Early Mews. All of these properties have high boundary walls and it is not possible to see into any of the windows or rear gardens. The remaining 3 units will look out towards Arlington Road and this does not result in any amenity issues. All of the units will benefit from adequate daylight and sunlight levels due to the large windows in each of the units.

An objection has been received from the occupants of a flat within 251-259 Camden High Street who is concerned about noise levels, however given that Arlington House backs on to the properties on Camden High Street and there is no shared amenity space between the properties it is very unlikely that any noise would be audible from within Arlington House.

Size of units

The studio sizes would range between 24 sqm and 33 sqm for the proposed bedsit accommodation. These unit sizes would be sub-standard for permanent residential dwellings (minimum 32 sqm for a 1 person flat as sought by Camden Planning Guidance). However, the temporary nature of the accommodation combined with the extensive communal facilities (lounge/lobby areas for the low cost rental units, and more extensive support facilities for the hostel units) should be taken into account. In these respects the internal standard of accommodation is considered acceptable.

Transport

The proposal will involve the construction of nine additional one-bedroom residential units. Camden's planning guidance states that one cycle space is required for every 250sqm of floor space. The applicant's proposal to provide nine extra cycle parking spaces to the existing cycle store, bringing the total of cycle parking available on-site up to 49 spaces, is therefore acceptable. The proposed new stands are covered, accessible and meet standards outlined in Camden's Planning Guidance.

Other Matters

Low rent bedsits

The occupancy of the low cost rented units is expected to encompass former hostel residents as well as person who simply have a housing need. However, a strict policy will be adopted regarding tenant selection to ensure a mix of these and include only people who are working and who are genuinely ready for independent living – the maximum stay will be 2 years and this will be secured via a S106 legal agreement. These tenants will therefore not have support needs. The units would serve a useful purpose as a stepping-stone for young people and/or former hostel residents into the private rented sector.

Disabled Access

The lifetime homes aspect of Policy DP6 is not applicable to this temporary nature of accommodation. However the submitted design and access statement outlines the accessibility of the building with regard to these units and it is considered to be acceptable.

Community safety action plan

In this instance the applicants have submitted a community safety action plan which outlines all of the meetings which take place with different organisations and when these meetings take place, this is considered to be acceptable in the context of the proposed scheme. Furthermore, in the 2007 scheme a crime prevention plan was approved by the Met Police and this requires to be adhered to.

The objection which was received also relayed fears over security to flats on Camden high Street, however it is worth noting that the design concept of the Arlington House proposals is to enhance the well being of its residents in a high quality environment and to dispel the 'nothing to do' attitude which has previously prevailed. It is therefore envisaged that the propensity for the hostel residents to be involved in, or affected by crime and disorder will be reduced by the alternative opportunities and activities provided within the property.

Conclusion and recommendation

The proposed development is considered to be broadly acceptable in terms of Camden's LDF and Camden Planning guidance, along with PPS5 and as such is recommended for approval subject to the signing of a s106 agreement securing the tenure to 2 years.

DISCLAIMER

Decision route to be decided by nominated members on Monday 19th December 2011.

For further information see

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