

Delegated Report (Members Briefing)		Analysis sheet	Expiry Date:	09/12/2011
		N/A / attached	Consultation Expiry Date:	17/11/2011
Officer		Application Number(s)		
Lauren McMahon		a) 2011/5134/P b) 2011/5135/L		
Application Address		Drawing Numbers		
47 Great Russell Street London WC1B 3PA		Refer to draft decision notice.		
PO 3/4	Area Team Signature	C&UD	Authorised Officer Signature	
NMS	 02/12/11			
Proposal(s)				
Change of use from office (Class B1) to residential (Class C3) at basement, first, second and third floor levels and change of use of the ground floor (rear proportion and hallway) from part shop (Class A1) and office (Class B1) to residential (Class C3) with the front proportion of the ground floor to remain as a shop use. The proposed C3 use would create a 2 bedroom residential dwelling and would incorporate alterations to the internal fabric and fenestration, a new rear terrace at first floor level, a rear terrace at roof level and removal of the roof to existing rear building to create walled garden.				
Recommendation(s):		a) Grant full planning permission subject to S106 Legal Agreement b) Grant listed building consent		
Application Type:		a) Full planning permission b) Listed building consent		

Conditions or Reasons for Refusal:	Refer to Draft Decision Notice					
Informatives:						
Consultations						
Adjoining Occupiers:	No. notified	09	No. of responses	03	No. of objections	02
			No. Electronic	00		
Summary of consultation responses:	<p>Ham & High 27/10/11 – 17/11/11 Site Notice 19/10/11 – 09/11/11</p> <p>An objection was received from the neighbouring shop owner at 46 Great Russell Street, who raised the following concerns:</p> <p><u>Loss of retail at the ground floor</u></p> <p>This application follows a withdrawn application to convert the whole building to residential. It suggests that retail will be retained on the ground floor. However, after looking carefully at the drawings and the application, this appears to be an attempt to achieve the intention of the first application - a conversion into a single dwelling house.</p> <p>The application refers to 'occasional art gallery and exhibition space on ground'. The ground floor remained in retail use until sale of the building in 2010. The floorspace declaration appears to be wrong when it suggests that there is no loss of retail involved in this application. The plan of 'existing' ground floor refers to 'temporary gallery office' (2) which was retail space until sale of the building to the applicant in 2010. The loss of this retail space and the staff kitchen is not referred to in the submitted documents.</p> <p><i>(officers response: refer to paragraphs 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3)</i></p> <p><u>Separation between the retail and residential uses</u></p> <p>Presumably the Boot Room/Courtyard/garden is intended for use by the residential user. However there appears to be no access to these except through the retail area. Furthermore, the plans show the opening up of a fireplace in the shop area which might suggest a residential rather than retail use.</p> <p>The objector states there should be a clear delineation of the retail space which should be separated from the residential use and that a statement of the intent to retain the shop use into the plans should be submitted.</p> <p>The objector states that the applicant should clearly show how the residential part of the building will access the bootroom, courtyard, walled garden and garden store to rear of the shop.</p> <p><i>(officers response: refer to paragraphs 1.3 and 4.3)</i></p> <p><i>The agent responded to the objection received and a further email was submitted by the objector, dated 1st November 2011, no further new issues were raised in the email.</i></p> <p>A letter of support was received from the occupier of No. 7 Russell Changers Bury Place:</p> <p><i>I fully support this application and only hope that the Council will see fit to approve it. I am a resident of the area and despair which I see the state of some of the once fine buildings on Great Russell Street and Museum Street. The area appears to be becoming shabbier, with awful tatty tourist shops sprouting along those same streets. Here finally is an application to show one of the buildings the love and attention it and the area deserves.</i></p>					

**CAAC/Local groups*
comments:**

*Please Specify

Bloomsbury CAAC: The advisory committee questioned the desirability of the terrace: given the restricted nature of the site and its surroundings.

(officers response: refer to paragraphs 5.3, 5.4, 6.1 and 6.2)

Site Description

The application site comprises a four-storey building with a basement level which is grade II listed and forms part of a significant row of terraces (Nos 43–48 Great Russell Street) dating from 1855–64. The site is located on the southern side of Great Russell Street. Adjoining to the west are similar properties with ground floor retail, to the east are the rear of properties fronting Museum Street and opposite is the British Museum. The building comprises retail use (Class A1) at the ground floor and office use (Class B1) at the basement, first, second and third floor levels, although has been vacant since 2010. The subject site is located within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area.

Relevant History

CTP/N14/28/8/18582 for the change of use of the ground floor from shop to offices was refused 14/06/1974. Reason for refusal: The proposed development involves an increase in office accommodation contrary to the Council policy and the change of use would involve the loss of a retail unit which the Council considers desirable in this location.

2011/2850/P and 2011/2851/L for change of use from offices (Class B1) to dwelling house (Class C3) and works including removal of pitched roof to create roof terrace with stair enclosure, balcony at rear first floor level, removal of roof to rear extension to create walled garden and installation of railings to front lightwell was withdrawn 12/09/2011. The application was withdrawn following advice from assessment officer that the application would be refused as the loss of retail was not considered acceptable.

Relevant policies

LDF Core Strategy

- CS1 Distribution of growth
- CS3 Other highly accessible areas
- CS5 Managing the impact of growth and development
- CS6 Providing quality homes
- CS7 Promoting Camden's centres and shops
- 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
- CS17 Making Camden a safer place
- CS19 Delivering and monitoring the Core Strategy

Development Policies

- DP1 Mixed use development
- DP2 Making full use of Camden's capacity for housing
- DP5 Homes of different sizes
- DP6 Lifetime homes and wheelchair homes
- DP12 Supporting strong centres and managing the impact of food, drink, entertainment and other town centre uses
- DP13 Employment sites and premises
- DP16 The transport implications of development
- DP17 Walking, cycling and public transport
- DP18 Parking standards and the availability of car parking
- DP19 Managing the impact of parking
- DP20 Movement of goods and materials
- DP21 Development connecting to the highway network
- 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
- DP29 Improving access
- DP32 Air quality and Camden's Clear Zone

Bloomsbury Conservation Area Statement
Camden Planning Guidance 2011

Assessment

1.0 Proposal

- 1.1 The application seeks permission to change the use of the basement, first, second and third floor from B1 Office use to C3 residential and change of use of the ground floor (rear proportion and hallway) from retail (Class A1) and office (Class B1) to residential (Class C3). The proposed C3 use would create a 2 bedroom residential dwelling (total floorspace of 241.5 sqm) which would incorporate a cycle parking space at the ground floor. The retail use (Class A1) to the front proportion of the ground floor would be maintained (total floorspace 37.5 sqm). The retail and residential uses would be accessible via two new internal doors at the ground floor entrance which would ensure these uses are separate.
- 1.2 The application would incorporate various internal and fenestration alterations, a new rear balcony at first floor level, a rear terrace at roof level and the removal of the roof to existing rear extension to create walled garden.
- 1.3 The existing internal ground floor door to the rear of the shop was removed from the scheme and the gap was infilled and further two new internal doors were positioned in the ground floor entrance hall. These amendments were requested to ensure the retail and residential uses are separate.

2.0 Loss of employment use

- 2.1 The proposal seeks to change the use at the basement, ground (partial), first, second and third floor from B1 office use to C3 residential use and therefore the loss of employment is an issue for consideration.
- 2.2 Paragraph 8.8 of CS8 confirms that the future supply of offices in the borough can meet future demand and consequently, the Council will consider proposals for other uses of older office premises if they involve the provision of permanent housing. Policy DP13 states that where it can be demonstrated that a site is not suitable for any business use, the Council may allow a change to permanent residential uses.
- 2.3 Evidence suggests that the property has been occupied as office and retail use since at least the 1970s. The site is currently vacant and the last tenant, Age Care, occupied the office space from the 1980s to 2010. Given the layout of the property it appears that it was formerly used as a house prior to its office and retail use.
- 2.4 When assessing applications for a change of use the Council will consider whether there is potential for that use to continue. The site is not located in a Industry Area, is not suitable for a mix of uses including light industry and local distribution warehousing, it is not possible to be serviced by means other than a car, it has restricted on-site vehicle space for servicing and it is not close to other noise generating uses. Therefore the building could be used for flexible employment uses such as B1c light industry or B8 storage/warehousing uses.
- 2.5 Furthermore, the nature of the building does not readily lend itself to employment floorspace: there are no lifts for the upper floors, the floors are serviced by narrow staircases and the internal layout is not flexible enough to allow for a range of employment generating uses. Given the building is listed it is difficult to achieve flexible and open space employment spaces without destroying the historical fabric. The host building is considered to be unsuitable for its continued employment use and therefore the loss of office space is considered to be satisfactory with regard to policies CS8 and DP13 in the LDF.

3.0 Loss of retail use

- 3.1 The application seeks the change of use of the ground floor (rear proportion and hallway) from part retail (Class A1) and office (Class B1) to residential (Class C3) with the front proportion of the retail being maintained. The subject site comprises 65 sqm A1 use at the ground floor and the proposed would reduce this floorspace by 27.5 sqm.
- 3.2 The application site forms part of the greater Museum Street area, which is characterised by groups of specialist shops which contribute greatly to the variety and character of the borough. Whilst these Speciality Shopping Areas do not form part of the network of centres Policy CS7 seeks to protect them as raised in paragraph 7.11.
- 3.2 Furthermore, Policy DP10 of the LDP stipulates that Council will seek to protect shops outside centres by only granted planning permission for development that involves a net loss of shop floorspace outside designated centres provided that: alternative provision is available within 5-10 minutes' walking distance; there is clear evidence that the current use is not viable; and within the Central London Area, the development positively contributes to the local character, function, viability and amenity. Great Russell Street hosts various ground floor speciality shops and therefore alternative shop floorspace is available within 5-10 minutes' walking distance of the site. The loss of retail space is associated with the rear proportion of the ground floor and the proposal seeks to maintain the active shop front. Although the proposal would result in a loss of retail space, the remaining retail (37.5 sqm) is considered to be sufficient enough to support a small specialist shop and therefore the character of the greater Museum Street area Speciality Shopping Area would be protected. Therefore the remaining retail area would be considered viable. The site is located within the Central London Area and the proposal will overall contribute to the local character, function, viability and amenity and therefore the loss of retail floorspace is considered to be satisfactory.

4.0 Standard of the proposed residential accommodation

- 4.1 The proposed 2 bedroom residential dwelling will be located on the basement, ground (partial), first, second and third floors. The level of sunlight and daylight to the habitable rooms on the first, second and third floor levels are considered to be acceptable for the future occupants. The floor to ceiling heights of the habitable rooms would exceed 2.3m on the first, second and third floor levels. All habitable rooms would have access to ventilation. The application seeks to remove the roof of the existing rear extension and create a walled rear garden space for the residential use and thus the occupants will have access to private open space. The residential properties to the rear would not detrimentally impact upon the future occupants with regard to overlooking.
- 4.2 Building regulations would ensure that the sound proofing between the residential and retail use to protect the future occupant's residential amenities. However a condition would also be attached which would require levels of soundproofing to be submitted as the residential use would be adjacent to retail use.
- 4.3 The retail and residential uses would share an entrance and two new internal doors at ground floor would provide access to each use. The new internal doors would ensure that these uses are separate and is considered acceptable in this regard.
- 4.4 Lifetime homes have been considered as part of the proposal. As the proposal is a change of use it has not been possible to meet all of the 16 criteria. However where the criteria cannot be met a justification has been provided. In summary the proposed residential dwelling is considered to provide an acceptable level of amenity to the future occupants.

5.0 Design and appearance

- 5.1 The subject building is grade II listed and is located within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area. Various internal and fenestration works are proposed as part of the application, however details of these works are lacking and therefore a condition will be imposed requesting further details of these works.
- 5.2 The proposal seeks to remove the roof of the existing outbuilding to create a rear walled garden. The roof of the building is an unsympathetic modern addition and its removal would be supported. When viewed from the upper floors the, the rear area is almost entirely built over, therefore the creation of a small outdoor space would provide some welcome relief in the townscape.
- 5.3 A new terrace is proposed on a half landing level at the first floor and would involve the removal of the existing water tank. The terrace would project 2m from the rear, at a width of 2m and would involve building up the brick parapet (1.1m high) and changing the existing window to French doors. The subject window is not original and therefore there is no objection to the removal of the window. The brick parapet to enclose the terrace would not appear out of place and would read as a continuation of the existing rear wing. The application does not seek any alterations to the roof terrace as it is an existing structure and therefore it is considered satisfactory in this regard.
- 5.4 Overall the proposed alterations and additions are considered to preserve the listed building and the character and appearance of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area.

6.0 Amenity

- 6.1 Given the proposed terrace at the first floor level is located off a landing and is modest in size (4 sqm) it would not likely lead to large gatherings of people and therefore would not cause significant noise disturbance. The terrace would not cause any overlooking of the adjoining properties given the rear areas of the neighbours properties are almost entirely built over.
- 6.2 The proposal seeks to use the existing flat roof structure as a roof terrace. The existing structure is 1.8m long by 3m wide (5.4 sqm) and contains a brick parapet 1.4m high along the rear and side elevations. An existing internal stair structure from the third floor and a chute would provide access to the roof level and an existing narrow path around the perimeter of the roof would provide access to the roof terrace. Given that the flat roof structure is existing and can be currently accessed it would not create any further significant overlooking to the adjoining neighbours. Furthermore, given the modest size of the terrace and that it is not positioned off a habitable room it would not be a highly used structure.

7.0 Transport

- 7.1 The Public Transport Accessibility Level is 6b which is the highest rating; the application site is within walking distance of Holborn tube station and various bus routes accessible at New Oxford Street. Accordingly the new residential

dwelling should be secured as car free. This would be secured by a Section 106 legal agreement.

- 7.2 The application includes one cycle parking bay at ground floor level, for the residential use. A condition would be attached to any permission granted requiring further details of the cycle parking to be submitted.

8.0 Sustainability

- 8.1 Council guidance in CPG section 4 requires that at least 10% of the project cost should be spent on improvements to the energy efficiency rating of a building that is subject to a change of use. The application site is grade II listed and it is acknowledged that the special features need to be conserved and thus it is difficult to achieve the 10% target as stipulated. Given the constraints of the subject site it would be difficult to reach the 10% target and therefore the proposal is considered to be satisfactory in this regard.

- 9.0 Recommendation:** Grant Planning Permission and Listed Building Consent.

