

Delegated Report		Analysis sheet		Expiry Date:		20/09/2010	
		N/A		Consultation Expiry Date:		25/08/2010	
Officer				Application Number			
John Sheehy				2010/4019/P			
Application Address				Drawing Numbers			
Unit 10 Utopia Village 7 Chalcot Road London, UK NW1 8LH				Refer to draft decision			
PO 3/4	Area Team Signature	C&UD	Authorised Officer Signature				
Proposal							
Erection of an additional floor with a curved roof for office use (Class B1) to the 2 storey flat-roofed element of the existing part-2/ part-3 storey office building.							
Recommendation:		Refused					
Application Type:		Full Planning Permission					
Conditions or Reasons for Refusal:		Refer to Draft Decision Notice					
Informatives:							
Consultations							
Adjoining Occupiers:		No. notified	63	No. of responses	52	No. of objections	51
Summary of consultation responses:		<p>Site notice displayed for 3 weeks.</p> <p>Objections were received from 51 properties, including a petition with 19 signatures. In summary the following concerns were raised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Impact on skyline; - Additional bulk is unacceptable; - Detrimental impact on appearance of existing building; - Design not in keeping with CA - Detrimental impact on the CA; - Design lacks respect for the site; - Inappropriate materials and detailing proposed; - Loss of sunlight/ daylight to neighbouring properties; - Loss of sky view; - Loss of privacy; - No need for such development in this residential area – there is a lot of existing vacant office space in the area; - Artificial light pollution; - Additional traffic and parking congestion. 					
CAAC/Local groups comments:		Primrose Hill CAAC: Object: while we do not object in principle to the proposed extension, or the design approach adopted, and welcome the enhancement of employment space in the conservation area, the impact on the neighbouring buildings, and their amenity, would be harmful.					
Site Description							
<p>The site is located within Utopia Village, a part 2-, part 3- storey business centre laid out around an L-shaped courtyard within the urban block formed by the buildings on Chalcot Road, Edis Street and Egbert Street. Utopia Village is accessed via a passage from Chalcot Road and a separate access through an arch at the end of Egbert Street. The ground level of the site is at a lower level than that of the surrounding streets.</p> <p>The application relates to a flat-roofed 1950s building located at the rear of the courtyard. This building has a rectangular footprint. It is 2 storeys in height onto the courtyard and it is attached to a 3-storey former warehouse/ light industrial structure. At its western end it terminates the vista along Egbert Street, stepping up to 3 storeys in height at this point.</p>							

The site is located in Primrose Hill Conservation Area. The group of buildings on the site is not listed, however it is identified as making a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The majority of the other buildings making up Utopia Village are late 19th and early 20th century light industrial buildings and warehouses.

Relevant History

October 2002 Application for the erection of a curved roof extension to the main block fronting Egbert Street and an extension to the inner central block by a pitch roof extension over the existing walkway, withdrawn by the applicant, ref. PEX0100374.

Relevant policies

LDF Core Strategy and Development Policies

CS5 Managing the Impact of growth and development
CS8 Promoting a successful and inclusive Camden economy
CS11 Promoting sustainable and efficient travel
CS14 Promoting high quality places and conserving our heritage
CS15 Protecting and improving our parks and open spaces and encouraging biodiversity

DP13 Employment premises and sites
DP16 The Transport Implications of Development
DP17 Walking, Cycling and Public Transport
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

Camden Planning Guidance 2006

Primrose Hill Conservation Area Statement

Assessment

Proposal: Erection of an additional floor with a curved roof on the 2 storey flat roofed element of the part-2/part-3 storey office building.

The proposed additional floor would have 3 elevations: long elevations to the front and to the rear; and a short east-facing elevation at the corner of the courtyard.

The additional floor would be 3.4m in height (the top of the curved roof). It would occupy the entire extent of the flat roof and its flank walls would tilt outwards from both the front and the rear elevations: the short elevation facing onto the corner of the courtyard would not tilt outwards. The additional floor would be largely glazed. On its long sides it would have full-height metal columns and bracing, visually and structurally supporting the additional floor.

The floor area of the roof is 20.65m x 4.675m. The additional useable office (Class B1) floorspace proposed would be 59m².

Assessment

The application site is located within an established employment complex and, in land use policy terms, may be suitable for extension to create additional employment floorspace, in particular the provision of flexible employment space capable of being used within a range of B1 uses, including B1c Light Industrial. On balance, given the location and scale of the additional floor, no concerns are raised with the proposal in land use policy terms. The principal considerations material to the determination of this application are therefore:

- the impact on the appearance of the building and the character and appearance of the Conservation Area; and
- the impact on neighbour amenity.

Background

In assessing this application regard has been primarily had to LDF Policies CS5 and DP26 which state that the Council will protect the quality of life of neighbours by only granting permission for development that does not

cause harm to amenity. With particular reference to this proposal Policy DP26 states that the factors that will be considered include:

- Overshadowing and outlook.

The Council's design policies are aimed at achieving a high standard of design in all developments and preserving the architectural quality of buildings. The Council's policies for developments in a Conservation Area are aimed at preserving or enhancing the special character and appearance of the area. Regard has therefore been had to LDF policies DP24 'Securing High Quality Design', and DP25 'Conserving Camden's Heritage'.

Policy DP24 states that the Council will grant permission for development that is designed to a high standard. In terms of this application, the following considerations contained within this policy are relevant:

- development should consider the character, setting, context and the form and scale of neighbouring buildings;
- development should consider the character and proportions of the existing building, where extensions and alterations are proposed;

Policy DP25 'Conserving Camden's Heritage' states that within Conservation Areas, the Council will only grant permission for development that preserves or enhances the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

Discussion

The proposed additional floor would result in a 3-story form on the north-eastern side of the terrace of buildings 1-13 Egbert Street in place of the existing 2-storey form.

The additional floor would result in an increase in height of this elevation of 3.4m along the length of the southern flank of the building, a distance of 11.285m: the additional floor would stretch across the entire flat-roofed area at second floor level with no visual break.

As existing, the rear first floor elevation of the application building slopes away from the neighbouring residential buildings on Egbert Street. A feature of the proposed extension is that its walls would be tilted outwards on both front and rear elevations. By virtue of this feature, the rear elevation of the application building would slope back in the direction of the properties at 1-13 Egbert Street.

The buildings within Utopia Village are constructed against the boundary walls abutting the rear gardens of the residential terrace on Egbert St – these buildings are 3 storeys in height, stepping down to 1 storey immediately adjoining the rear gardens of the terrace. As a result of the proposal, the rear of these residential properties would be enclosed, not only by the existing 3-storey buildings, but also by the proposed additional floor. The impact of the additional floor would be particularly noticeable within properties 9, 11 and 13 Egbert Street which are in close proximity to the application building.

The cumulative impact of the proposed additional floor, due to its scale, siting, unbroken nature and form, tilting outwards in the direction of the neighbouring properties, in addition to the heavily built-up surrounding area, is considered to result in an increased sense of enclosure to the rear garden areas, rear residential windows, rear balconies and rear terraces of the properties on Egbert Street. This would detrimentally impact on the outlook of the habitable rooms of these properties and enclose their outside amenity spaces, creating a significant and harmful overbearing effect. The application would therefore result in a detrimental impact on the outlook and residential amenity of occupiers of these properties, contrary to policy CS5 and DP26.

The application building is a 1950s modernist block. It has been carefully massed and arranged so as to limit the impact of its bulk within and around Utopia Village. The height responds to the narrowness of the courtyard and reflects the height of the surrounding streets. The building is substantially glazed with slender concrete framing, metal windows and distinctive blue spandrel panels. Due to its elongated form and large expanses of fenestration the building has a pronounced horizontal character. The simple period detailing results in the building having a lightweight appearance. It is identified as positively contributing to the character and appearance of the conservation area.

Due to the size and location of the proposed additional floor, it would be a highly prominent new feature when viewed from within the application site and neighbouring sites. As noted above the additional floor would occupy the entire roof of the building with no visual break and the outer walls would tilt outwards towards the

neighbouring properties. The erection of the additional floor would fundamentally alter the appearance of the building, in particular the rear elevation, where it would form an unsatisfactory junction between the existing and proposed elements. The form of the extension (especially with the overhang) would result in a prominent, obtrusive and top-heavy extension.

The design of the additional floor would jar with the overall refined façade of the building, especially the crude structural support and bracing proposed. When viewed from the corner of the courtyard the addition would result in a disjointed appearance with the new curved roof spanning two distinctly differing type of buildings (traditional brick and 1950s modernist design).

The development is considered to have a harmful impact on the architectural quality of the building and the character and appearance of the wider Conservation Area.

Other issues

There is considered to be no loss of privacy to neighbours as a result of the proposal as views into neighbouring properties would generally be oblique and not deep into habitable rooms. If it was recommended that planning permission be granted, a condition could be attached to ensure that windows looking towards residential properties are obscure glazed and fixed shut to a height of 1.70m internally (opaque white glass panels to the rear elevation are indicated on the submitted plans).

The proposal additional floor would be located to the north of the nearby residential terrace and would have minimal impact on access to sunlight of these properties.

The proposed second floor would have a height of 3.4 metres and would be set away from the side boundary with 13 Egbert Street by 3.2m. The additional floor falls within the BRE 45 degree line of the lower floor windows of the adjacent property in plan and elevation – these windows would appear to serve kitchens, bedrooms and other habitable rooms. The proposed extension would therefore be likely to result in an unreasonable reduction to the daylight to these windows. A BRE Sunlight/ Daylight report has not been provided in respect of this application therefore the applicant has not demonstrated that the proposal would comply with BRE guidelines and the application is refused on this basis. An informative has been attached to the decision notice stating that, without prejudice to any future application or appeal, this reason for refusal may be overcome by the submission of an independent daylight and sunlight analysis which would assess the impact of the development on the adjacent windows on the rear elevation of 13 Chalcot Road and other buildings along this terrace. This report would need to demonstrate that the proposal would meet the standards set out in BRE guidance 'Site Layout planning for daylight and sunlight; a guide to good practice' (1991).

Conclusion

It is considered that the cumulative impact of the additional floor in terms of its impact on neighbour amenity would result in an increase in enclosure and overbearing to the detriment of neighbour amenity. In design terms the extension is considered to dominate the existing distinctive lightweight building and result in an unsatisfactory junction on its rear (southern) elevation, resulting in an inappropriate alteration to the existing building. In addition, the applicant has failed to demonstrate compliance with BRE standards in terms of the impact of the extension on the access to daylight of neighbouring properties: the application is also refused on this basis.

Recommendation: refused.

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