

<b>Delegated Report (Members Briefing)</b>		<b>Analysis sheet</b>		<b>Expiry Date:</b>		<b>09/09/2010</b>	
		N/A		<b>Consultation Expiry Date:</b>		18/08/2010	
<b>Officer</b>				<b>Application Number</b>			
Jennifer Walsh				2010/3070/P 2010/3071/L			
<b>Application Address</b>				<b>Drawing Numbers</b>			
27 Little Russell Street London WC1A 2HN				Please refer to draft decision notice			
<b>PO 3/4</b>	<b>Area Team Signature</b>	<b>C&amp;UD</b>	<b>Authorised Officer Signature</b>				
<b>Proposal(s)</b>							
<p>P- The change of use from office (Class B1a) and one top floor flat to four x two bedroom flats (Class C3) at basement, ground, first and second floor level and associated additions and alterations to include the erection of a mansard roof extension with dormer windows and rooflights at third and new fourth floor level to existing top floor flat, erection of glazed extension in lightwell at first floor level, creation of new balcony at front third floor level, and the installation of new lift</p> <p>L- Extensions and alterations in association with change of use from office (Class B1a) and one top floor flat to four x two bedroom flats (Class C3) at basement, ground, first and second floor level, including the erection of a mansard roof extension with dormer windows and rooflights at third and new fourth floor level to existing top floor flat, erection of glazed extension in lightwell at first floor level, creation of new balcony at front third floor level, and the installation of new lift as well as associated internal works.</p>							
<b>Recommendation:</b>		<b>Grant Planning Permission subject to Section 106 agreement Grant Listed Building Consent</b>					
<b>Application Type:</b>		<b>Full Planning Permission Listed Building Consent</b>					
<b>Conditions or Reasons for Refusal:</b>		<b>Refer to Draft Decision Notice</b>					
<b>Informatives:</b>							
<b>Consultations</b>							
<b>Adjoining Occupiers:</b>		No. notified	<b>18</b>	No. of responses	<b>01</b>	No. of objections	<b>01</b>
				No. Electronic	<b>00</b>		
<b>Summary of consultation responses:</b>		<b>24d Little Russell Street objects to the proposal on the following grounds:</b> -How far will the projected extension and balcony on the third floor extend into the current space? <i>(1.6m increase in depth at 3<sup>rd</sup> floor with raised rooflight to prevent overlooking)</i> -What are the potential risks of being overlooked as a neighbour? <i>(see amenity section- the balcony will have etched glass to prevent overlooking)</i> - If a new lift is to be installed, how will you ensure the mechanism is not too noisy for other neighbours? The previous lift was very noisy but only used during office hours; the change to residential use would mean it is in operation 24/7 <i>(there will be a new lift which would have to comply with current building regulations etc).</i>					
<b>CAAC/Local groups comments:</b>		No response has been received from Bloomsbury CAAC					

## Site Description

4 storey plus basement Grade II listed former school building spanning between Little Russell Street and Gilbert Place, dating from 1879-80. The property is located to the north of Little Russell Street, located to the North of St Georges School. The property is located in the Bloomsbury Conservation Area.

## Relevant History

None relevant

## Relevant policies

### Camden Replacement UDP 2006

SD1 Quality of Life  
SD2 Planning Obligations  
SD6 Amenity for occupiers  
H1 New Housing  
H7 Lifetime Homes and Wheelchair housing  
B1 General design principles  
B3 Alterations and extensions  
B6 Listed Buildings  
B7 Conservation Areas  
E2 Retention of existing business uses  
T3 Pedestrians & Cycling  
T8 Car free housing and car capped housing  
T9 Impact of Parking  
T12 Works affecting highways  
Appendix 6 Parking Standards

### Camden Planning Guidance 2006

### LDF Core Strategy and Development Policies

*The Inspector's Report into the Camden Local Development Framework Core Strategy and Development Policies Development Plan documents ("DPD"s) was published on 13th September and found the policies in the DPDs to be sound. This means "considerable weight" can now be given to these LDF policies even though at this stage they have yet to be formally adopted by the Council. Where there is a conflict between UDP policies and these LDF policies, the Planning Inspectorate would consider it reasonable to follow the latter. However prior to formal adoption, UDP policies should still be taken into account as the Council's adopted Development Plan.*

CS1 - Distribution of growth  
CS5 - Managing the impact of growth and development  
CS6 - Providing quality homes  
CS11 - Promoting sustainable and efficient travel  
CS14 - Promoting high quality places and conserving our heritage  
CS15 - Protecting and improving our parks and open spaces & encouraging biodiversity  
CS16 - Improving Camden's health and well-being  
CS17 - Making Camden a safer place  
CS19 - Delivering and monitoring the Core Strategy

DP2 - Making full use of Camden's capacity for housing  
DP17 - Walking, cycling and public transport  
DP18 - Parking standards and the availability of car parking  
DP19 - Managing the impact of parking  
DP21 - Development connecting to the highway network  
DP24 - Securing high quality design  
DP25 - Conserving Camden's heritage  
DP26 - Managing the impact of development on occupiers and neighbours  
DP29 - Improving access

## Assessment

### Proposal

The application seeks planning permission and listed building consent for a change of use from a B1 (office use) with one residential unit, to provide four additional residential flats (Class C3) with alterations. The main alterations are installation of new lift and shaft, an infill extension to the existing lightwell, and a mansard roof extension wrapping around this internal lightwell.

The property has a C-shaped floorplate which rises above ground floor level and steps back around an internal lightwell. The neighbouring property has windows facing into their own internal lightwell. It is proposed to extend further into the lightwell and build further upwards on 2 sides, plus erect a roof extension on all 3 sides up to a level height of four storeys.

The application therefore applies for:

- installation of a roof extension on all sides plus side extension at 1<sup>st</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> floors facing the lightwell
- Installation of a glazed extension at 1<sup>st</sup> floor facing the lightwell
- Alterations to the windows and doors to the rear elevation
- Alterations to the internal layout of the property to create four residential units.

### LANDUSE

#### Change of use

This policy has a broad presumption against the loss of a business use on a site where there is potential for that use to continue. In this case it has to be acknowledged that the building is Grade II listed. The likely improvement in the building fabric as a result of the change of use has been a material consideration in the determination of similar proposals, such as similar conversions in and around Lincoln's Inn Fields. It is acknowledged that many modern office refurbishments can have a negative impact on the special fabric of a listed building. This may include air conditioning equipment, false ceilings and sub-division of the original floorplan of the building. Therefore, an exception may be made for the loss of employment floor space in the interests of preserving and restoring the listed building.

In terms of the provision of new housing, the Council's policy seeks the fullest use of underused sites and buildings for housing and provided that the accommodation reaches acceptable standards. This proposal would provide 4 additional residential units.

#### Lifetime Homes standards

All new dwellings, including conversions, should be built to Lifetime Homes standards wherever possible. The applicants have submitted a Lifetime Homes assessment and it is appreciated that due to the constraints of the site the potential for achieving all of the Lifetime Homes standards is limited. The applicants have carried out a 'best endeavours' exercise, and therefore the proposal is acceptable. It is recommended that an informative should be attached encouraging the applicant to meet the standards where possible.

#### Standard of accommodation

The proposed use would comprise 4 x 2-bedroom units and 1 x 3 bedroom units. Each two bed unit would provide approx 83.9sqm of habitable accommodation. The proposal would substantially exceed the minimum overall floor area requirement for a 4-person dwelling (75 sq.m). Each of the bedrooms would comply with the minimum floor area standards for double rooms.

The proposal is considered to create an acceptable standard of accommodation in terms of natural lighting to each of the habitable rooms as they would be served by the existing windows from both the front and rear elevations of the building.

### BULK/DESIGN

#### Roof extension

The lift is to be situated next to the main stair and set above the existing extension which is present at basement ground and first floor level. The lift shaft is to be extended to fourth floor level. It will abut the neighbouring property to the east of the site. The proposal seeks to extend the C shaped footprint. The roof extension will seek to replace the existing roof with a taller, slate-covered pitched roof. The proposed ridge level will be higher than the decorative gable feature to the front elevation, the pitch will be sloped to the middle of the site. Through the extension, the building will be built up to infill and complete the C pattern of development with a lightwell being retained in the middle of the application site and the neighbouring property. The roof extension is to be angled away from the neighbouring property. The existing third floor roof extension is to be replaced with a flat roof extension which is angled to allow light to the neighbouring windows within the existing lightwell.

Much of the original pitched roof was lost in the 1980s, when the space was enlarged and converted into residential accommodation. The existing replacement roof is a confused design which does not sit happily with the architecture of the floors below. Railings, French doors and a metal escape stair are all visible and do not enhance the building or streetscene. It is proposed to replace this with a taller, slate-covered pitched roof which is in the style of Queen Anne revival buildings, and which works more successfully with the building's C-shaped floorplan than the existing arrangement.

Four small dormer windows are to be inserted into the proposed roof extension on the front elevation and three small dormer windows are to be inserted to the rear elevation. The scale of such dormers is considered to be in keeping with the design of the proposed mansard, as well as the host property and wider conservation area. Whilst the proposed ridge level is higher than the decorative gable feature to the front, the pitch of the roof will ensure that its height does not appear over-dominant. The set-back section will be pulled forward and a window introduced. Small dormers will light the attic without appearing top-heavy. Decorative ridge tiles will be used to terminate the roof appropriately. Although the roof extension would be visible from both Gilbert Street and Little Russell Street, the extension is not considered to read as a dominant addition. The property to the east of the application site is two storeys higher than the application site, and therefore the proposed roof extension would be in scale with the host property and the wider streetscene. The proposed design is considered to improve the appearance of the building and to be in keeping with the architecture of the host building.

### **Balcony**

To the front elevation, a lead clad dormer is proposed to be introduced as an element of the proposed roof extension. This is to sit off the front building line and is to be behind the existing arched built fixture at second floor level. Behind the existing feature, a glass balustrade is proposed, and access is to be provided from the lead clad dormer to the balcony. There is an existing balcony and terrace in this location currently and therefore it is not considered that this installation would have a detrimental impact on the host property nor the wider conservation area.

### **Infill extension**

The existing lightwell within the application site's demise is narrow. There are windows overlooking this lightwell from the neighbouring property to the east which is both 24 Little Russell Street and 8 Gilbert Place. The application seeks permission for a glazed extension to infill the lightwell at first floor level. The proposed extension is to be obscure glazed. This is a small, simple structural glass addition, which is accessed via dropping the cill of an original window. The form of the window opening will be retained. The form, scale, position and design of the extension are not considered to have a harmful impact on the special interest of the building.

### **Internal alterations**

It is proposed to reconfigure the floor plans on each level to accommodate a flat on each floor. A partition will be introduced within the rear large room on each floor, and new door openings formed to link the central kitchen/dining space to the living area at the front. The redundant goods lift at the rear of the building will be removed, and a new lift installed in an area which was originally open courtyard (now infilled), thus not affecting any significant fabric. The building is now in residential use on the upper floor, but in the past was used as a warehouse and as offices. As such the internal structure has been heavily altered (prior to the building's listing), and there are few decorative features of interest beyond the principal stair, which remains intact. The principle stairs are to remain in their original location. Therefore, the internal proposed reconfiguration is considered acceptable in this location.

### **Rear**

Minor alterations are proposed to the rear elevation including the formation of a door into the small lightwell at lower ground level, in place of an existing window, in order to allow for maintenance access. This will be positioned below the existing top sash, which will be retained, and therefore the impact on the building's appearance will be very limited. Other alterations comprise the removal of redundant later doors, and reinstatement of lost windows, and localised brickwork repair, which will benefit the appearance of the building and conservation area. The rear elevation of the property is located on Gilbert Street. There are a variety of building ages along this street. The alterations to the rear are not considered to be read as a dominant feature and are sympathetic alterations to the existing building.

Therefore, it is concluded that the proposals are considered to preserve the building's special architectural and historic interest, in design terms.

### **AMENITY**

The proposals are considered to provide a good level of amenity for future occupants of the site; bedroom and living areas are all generous in size and well proportioned, and would have good access to natural light and ventilation. Due to the site constraints, there is limited outdoor space serving the property. However, due to the location of the site, it is considered that the property is in close proximity to a number of public open spaces including Russell Square Gardens and Bloomsbury Square Gardens.

The neighbouring properties at 24 Little Russell Street and 8 Gilbert place is currently in commercial use at basement level but residential at ground to third floor. Due to the existing footprint and height of the building, it is considered that the windows which face the rear lightwell receive a limited amount of natural light. Floorplans of the property have been assessed from the Councils records. This shows that the two 'wings' of the building have elevations on Little Russell Street and Gilbert Place. There is a linked element which has bedrooms on the first and second floor. The side wings are served by staircases. From a site visit to the application site, the flats appear to be in a similar layout. The windows which are of concern are the bedroom windows which directly face the proposed roof extension at first and second floor level. These particular windows are already severely affected due to the 'wings' of the property which meet the application site.

The proposal has taken these windows into account and the roof extension is to be angled away from these windows sloping up away from the lightwell to maintain daylight angles and sightlines rising from ground floor level up to the higher party wall of the neighbouring building to the west which is two storeys higher than the application site. The agent has

provided sight lines to ensure that the proposed extension does not worsen the existing situation. Therefore, as the bedroom windows are already impinged by the existing situation, it is not considered that the installation of a roof extension would have any further detrimental impact on the amenity of the neighbouring properties in terms of daylight nor sunlight or increased sense of enclosure.

The proposed windows which face the internal elevation of the neighbouring property serve communal areas and the staircase, and therefore although the application site is located only 8 metres away from these, there are no habitable rooms facing habitable rooms throughout the proposal. The proposed glazed extension at first floor level will have etched glass and thus would not result in any overlooking, provided a condition is imposed to ensure that this is obscure glazed and retained as such thereafter.

## **TRANSPORT**

Camden's Parking Standards for cycles state that 1 storage or parking space is required per residential unit. The proposal is for 5 residential units therefore 5 cycle storage/parking spaces are required. The applicant has not included provision for the required amount of cycle storage/parking in the proposed design. The proposals include the installation of a lift in the existing building to provide access to the upper floors. However, this lift is not large, and would not be able to accommodate a bicycle with both wheels touching the floor. However, it has been agreed that because the layout of the ground floor is not expected to change, it would be unreasonable for the Council to expect the proposal to include centralised cycle parking on the ground floor for the whole development. So long as sufficient space is provided for a bicycle to be stored out of the way in each unit, officers would consider this cycle parking to be acceptable as a lift has been provided to access these spaces (albeit less than ideal).

Car-free should be sought for housing and in areas of high public transport accessibility. Therefore, as this site has a PTAL rating of 6b (excellent) this development should be made car-free through a Section 106. Not making the development car-free would increase demand for on-street parking in the Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ) the site is within, especially as this CPZ is highly stressed where overnight demand exceeds 90%. Therefore, given the limited nature of parking availability within the area, in order to be acceptable in transport terms, this new residential unit is recommended to be designated car-free.

Given that the proposed extension works to the existing building will be considerable, it is thought that the level of construction trips could affect the smooth operation of the local highway network. Majority of the extension works will be to the rear of the existing building and hence there might be the need to close off Gilbert Place in order to allow construction vehicles to load and unload during construction. The closures could potentially affect the surrounding highway network. Therefore it is considered that a Construction Management Plan (CMP) is required in order to mitigate any adverse impacts.

In order to tie the development into the surrounding urban environment, a financial contribution should be required to repave the footway adjacent to the site. This work and any other work that needs to be undertaken within the highway reservation will need to be secured through a Section 106 Agreement with the Council. The Council will undertake all works within the highway reservation, at the cost to the developer. An estimate of £6,520 has been provided by the Highways engineer. This figure is for replacing all the existing York stone and kerbs.

### **Recommendations:**

**Grant Planning Permission subject to a Section 106 Agreement to secure the units as car free, a Construction Management Plan and a highways contribution of £6,520.**

**Grant listed building consent**

## **DISCLAIMER**

**Decision route to be decided by nominated members on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> October 2010. For further information see**

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