

Delegated Report		Analysis sheet		Expiry Date:		17/08/2010	
		N/A / attached		Consultation Expiry Date:		26/7/2010	
Officer				Application Number(s)			
Hugh Miller				2010/3307/P			
Application Address				Drawing Numbers			
The Wolfson Centre Mecklenburgh Square London WC1N 2AP				Refer to draft decision notice.			
PO 3/4	Area Team Signature	C&UD	Authorised Officer Signature				
Proposal(s)							
Replacement of eight windows with metal louvres at ground and first floor levels west elevation, enlargement of four windows on the west elevation; the creation of new emergency escape doors; including erection of new boundary fence and new gates to University building (Class D1).							
Recommendation(s):		Grant					
Application Type:		Full Planning Permission					
Conditions or Reasons for Refusal:		Refer to Draft Decision Notice					
Informatives:							
Consultations							
Adjoining Occupiers:		No. notified	00	No. of responses	00	No. of objections	00
				No. electronic	00		
Summary of consultation responses:		Site Notice displayed 29/6/2010, expires 20/7/2010. No response.					
CAAC/Local groups* comments: <small>*Please Specify</small>		<u>Bloomsbury CAAC</u> : No Comment.					

Site Description

A low and unimposing 1960's 2 storey brick construction, the building is accessed from the north via Mecklenburgh Square (road), with the east elevation facing onto the square (gardens) and the west elevation facing onto the playing pitches of Coram's Fields. There is a part brick and wire boundary fence that projects up to first floor level window cills and separates (Coram Fields) the playing field/sports pitch from the centre itself. It is within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area.

The Wolfson Centre is currently occupied by the Institute of Child Health and is located a short walk away from the Main Building Institute buildings of 30 Guilford street, on Mecklenburgh Square. It is used for clinical research, offices, teaching spaces and seminar accommodation. The works currently proposed are intended to upgrade the existing accommodation and building infrastructure to provide teaching and seminar accommodation of a standard appropriate to UCLs, the DDA and The Institute's international reputation.

Relevant History

December 2002 – PP granted - Installation of a 1.2m safety barrier around edge of roof; ref. PSX0204909.

October 1991 – PP granted - erection of a single storey extension to the front elevation at ground floor level to form a new plant room; ref. 9100534

Relevant policies

Replacement Unitary Development Plan 2006

SD6 –Amenity to occupiers & neighbours

B1 –General design principles

B3 - Alterations to existing buildings

B7 –Conservation areas

SD8 – Disturbance from plant and machinery

The following policies in the draft LDF Core Strategy and Development Policies documents have been taken into consideration.

CS1 – Distribution of growth

CS5 – Managing the impact of growth and development

CS14 – Promoting high quality places and conserving heritage / conservation areas

DP24 – Securing high quality design

DP26 & DP28 - Managing the impact of development on occupiers and neighbours

As the draft LDF Core Strategy and Development Policies documents have now been published, they are material planning considerations. However, as a matter of law, limited weight should be attached to them at this stage.

Assessment

Proposal

The proposed works comprises the installation of new internal mechanical ventilation and cooling to the Wolfson centre, which would require external works including:

- ❑ partial and full replacement of eight windows with metal acoustic louvres at 1st and 2nd floor levels west elevation; (in association with the installation of new internal plant equipment);
- ❑ alterations to the existing rooflights to the flat roof;
- ❑ formation of new emergency escape doors to west elevation;
- ❑ installation of new boundary fence that fronts the west elevation; including new gates to adjacent to the playing fields.

The main issues are i) the impact of the proposal on the appearance of the building & on the character & appearance of the local area and ii) neighbour amenity.

Design

The west elevation of The Wolfson Centre has high level windows at ground floor level with regular proportioned windows at first floor level, without any louvers installed. It is proposed to replace eight of the existing windows on both floors with louvers. The louvers would partially cover the upper portions of four windows on the ground and first floor elevation and fully covered four windows at the first and ground floor levels. The dimensions of the four fully covered window openings would increase with the ground floor opening being made significantly larger in terms of their general scale and proportions; nevertheless they would harmonize with the smaller altered openings that lies immediately above and is therefore not considered to be visually harmful in this location only being visible from adjacent playing fields. The proposed louvers would comprise aluminium with powder coated finish in colour to compliment the existing brick work.

The louvres when installed would set within the window reveal to minimise their overall visual impact on the appearance of the building. In general, window alterations can change the buildings appearance, particularly when the altered building forms a group. In this instance it is a single building of inconsequential bulk or design, the elevation to be altered is enclosed by public open space and

playing fields; a relatively low proportion of the windows are to be altered and is considered satisfactory. The substantive window openings on both floors would remain in situ and therefore the proposed louvers would not detract unduly from the appearance of the host building. It is considered that, given the building's utilitarian appearance, the proposal would not be visually unsympathetic.

Roof alterations

The proposed alterations/ refurbishment of the roof would have a similar completed finish to the existing and therefore would not materially harm the appearance of the building or the conservation area and is satisfactory.

New doors

New steel doors with powder coated black painted finish to match existing escape doors would replace two high level windows at ground level on the west elevation. The proposed double doors are for emergency purposes and they are satisfactory in design terms and would not harm the appearance of the conservation area or the building itself.

Fencing

New steel open square mesh fencing measuring 5.0m in height is proposed to replace the existing fence which measure 3.5m; an increase of 1.5m. The new boundary fence only relates to the length of the exposed yellow brick elevation and it would include new gates to provide access for purposes of emergency. The replacement fence and gates would not impact on the appearance of the host building or harm the appearance of the conservation area and are satisfactory.

Neighbour amenity

A noise attenuation report by Environmental Equipment Corporation (EEC) dated 17/3/2010 was submitted in support of the application. However as plant is installed internally in the building, it would not on its own (without louvres) require planning permission. Nonetheless, the Council's Environmental Health Officer is satisfied that the acoustic report demonstrates that Camden's noise conditions would be met. However, it is considered that conditions to regulate noise levels in keeping with the Council's standards are attached. There are no residential occupiers close to the western elevation to be altered and the proposed alterations and new fencing would not have any impact on residential amenity. The proposal accords with SD6 and is satisfactory.

Recommendation Grant planning permission.

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