

Delegated Report (Members Briefing)		Analysis sheet		Expiry Date:	13/07/2010
		N/A		Consultation Expiry Date:	18/06/2010
Officer			Application Number(s)		
Jennifer Walsh			2010/2227/P		
Application Address			Drawing Numbers		
42 Great Russell Street and 1a Coptic Street London WC1B 3PH			Please refer to draft decision notice		
PO 3/4	Area Team Signature	C&UD	Authorised Officer Signature		
Proposal(s)					
Erection of an additional storey on 2 nd floor at 1A Coptic Street, installation of pavement lights, a rear lightwell and skylights at ground floor, a new roof level staircase access enclosure and associated alterations, as a variation to planning permission granted 11/11/2009 (2009/1820/P) for Change of use from education facility (Class D1) to a self-contained flat on the ground floor and a self-contained maisonette at basement, ground and first to third floors (Class C3))					
Recommendation:		Grant planning permission subject to Deed of Variation to Section 106 agreement for car-free housing			
Application Type:		Full Planning Permission			
Conditions or Reasons for Refusal:		Refer to Draft Decision Notice			
Informatives:					

Consultations

Adjoining Occupiers:	No. notified	17	No. of responses	01	No. of objections	01
			No. Electronic	00		
Summary of consultation responses:	Flat 15, Stedham Chambers object to the plans on the following grounds: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - They are very overlooked by other buildings and has an impact on the outside space. - Would this new addition have a roof garden? (Officers Response: Please refer to paragraph 2.4) - Would the windows overlook Stedham Chambers? (Officers Response: Please refer to paragraph 5.2) - They currently feel very exposed. 					
CAAC/Local groups comments:	Bloomsbury CAAC object to the proposal on the following grounds: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The additional storey would be contrary to the established pattern of lower linking secondary buildings and would create an oppressive feeling in this narrow historic street. (Officers Response: Please refer to paragraph 2.0) - Detract from the important contribution made to the character and appearance of the conservation area made by the existing buildings. (Officers Response: Please refer to paragraph 2.0) - Concern is also expressed about the roof structure/shed and the visual intrusion of the use of the roof terrace. (Officers Response: Please refer to paragraph 2.4) 					

Site Description

The application site is located on the corner of Great Russell Street and Coptic Street and comprises a part two storey, part three storey building plus basement accommodation that benefits from an authorised use as an educational facility (Class D1 use). The building has been vacant since 2005/2006. It was originally occupied by Elite College that operated as a language centre.

To the north of the site lies the British Museum that is a Grade II* Listed Building. To the west, east and south of the site are mainly commercial properties.

The building is not listed but is within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area.

Relevant History

16/07/2002 – Planning permission was granted for the retention of the premises from class B1 (office) to D1 (education). Condition 1 of this permission restricted the use of the premises for educational purposes only in order to safeguard the amenity of the adjoining occupiers and the area generally from noise and general activity associated with the use (ref no: PSX0104830).

2009/1820/P: Planning permission was granted for the Change of use from education facility (Class D1) to a self-contained flat on the ground floor and a self-contained maisonette at basement, ground and first to third floors (Class C3), subject to a section 106 agreement for car-free housing. (not yet implemented)

Relevant policies

Camden's Replacement Unitary Development Plan 2006

SD1 – Quality of Life

SD2 – Planning obligations

SD6 – Amenity for occupiers and neighbours

B1 – General design principles

B3 – Alterations and extensions

B7 – Conservation areas

T8- Car free housing and car capped housing

T9 - Impact of Parking

Camden Planning Guidance 2006

Bloomsbury Conservation Area Appraisal

LDF Core Strategy and Development Policies

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.

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 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

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

1.0 The proposal

1.1 This application seeks permission for the following works:

- The creation of an additional storey at 2nd floor level above 1a Coptic Street (ie. the low section between the main property and the neighbouring one at no.1) with three windows to both the front and rear elevation to match that of the existing building.
- The creation of double doors to the elevation fronting Coptic Street and insertion of a new window at 1st floor level to side elevation, alterations to all other existing windows.
- The creation of a lightwell to the rear elevation of the property and installation of skylights on the rear ground floor courtyard and pavement lights to the front elevation along Coptic Street.
- Installation of a glazed and lead panelled roof lantern to enclose the stair and provide access to the refurbished roof terrace.

1.2 Revisions have been received to show alterations to the proposed stair lantern at roof level as well as alterations to change the proposed pavement grills to pavement lights.

1.3 The property is to be split into 2 residential dwellings under planning permission 2009/1820/P which granted permission for one 1 bedroom unit to the corner ground floor and basement level of the application site. The remainder of the property is to be a large maisonette with three bedrooms.

1.4 The main issues to consider are

- Design
- Impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area
- Amenity
- Impact on transport and the highway

2.0 Design

2.1 The existing previous two storey rear extension on Coptic Street forms part of the Great Russell Street building on the corner of Coptic Street. The main building and 2-storey return are contemporary to one another and date from the mid 19th Century. The design of the main building is continued in the 2 storey return with slightly less embellishment to the parapet cornice. It is considered that the extension compliments the main part of the building in design, scale and materials as well as performing an important townscape link between the buildings facing Great Russell Street and those on Coptic Street.

2.2 The design of the proposed single storey extension above the existing two-storey extension (to form a three storey return) has been paired down to match the existing simply adorned two-storey extension. The return building would remain a full storey below the main façade which reveals the rear façade of the main building; would not visually dominate the main part of the building; and allows the hierarchy of the building to be retained.

2.3 Camden Planning Guidance states that certain building forms may lend themselves to side extensions. It is considered that the 2nd floor extension at the application site is not unduly prominent in the streetscape and, due to it maintaining a gap between the application site and the neighbouring property along Coptic Street, the extension is considered to be subordinate to the building in terms of location, building lines, height, bulk, mass, form and scale. The Guidance goes on to state that extensions should respect the design of the original building and they should be one full storey below roof eaves/parapet level, so as to respect the proportions of the streetscene. It is considered that the proposed extension does respect the built form of the application site, the neighbouring properties and that of the wider Conservation area. The extension is therefore considered acceptable in design terms.

2.4 The current proposal seeks to erect a single storey conservatory extension on the roof to serve as a lantern for the main staircase access to the existing roof terrace. This element of the application has been revised as the highest part of the conservatory would have been taller than the chimney stack which forms an important aspect of the roofscape in the area. Moreover the conservatory would be visible from street level and the steps of the British Museum. The principle of

glazed roof top access is acceptable; however to mitigate against the harm caused by a rooftop conservatory, especially at night, the applicants have resubmitted plans showing the southern elevation clad of solid material so to appear as a traditional roof access from Coptic Street. The height of the proposed roof lantern has also been reduced so as not to appear as a dominant structure. The lantern now has a monopitched glazed roof which slopes upwards away from the Coptic Street elevation. Due to the height of the existing building, as well as the narrowness of Coptic Street, it is considered that the revised the roof structure would not be visible from the street. The revised roof lantern is therefore considered acceptable in design terms.

2.5 Pavement lights are proposed to be inserted under five of the existing windows along Coptic Street. There are examples of pavement lights along the street and it is considered that this element will continue to provide a solid ground level against the front building line and would not disrupt the continuity and rhythm of the facades with the need to enclose the lightwell with railings. Therefore the installation of pavement lights to get more light into the basement rooms is not considered to cause harm to the character and appearance of the host property and the wider Conservation Area.

2.6 As it appears that the proposed pavement lights are to be inserted into the public highway, Highways consent would have to be sought before any alterations are implemented- an informative will be attached to advise this.

2.7 Alterations are also proposed to the fenestration across the whole building. Double doors are proposed to provide a secondary access of Coptic Street into Flat 2. The existing windows on the front elevation are to be upgraded to double glazed units. An existing window on the front elevation facing Coptic Street is to be reinstated as it is currently blocked up. It is considered that the proposal to insert a set of double doors and reinstate an existing window would not have a dominant impact on the host property. The detailed design of the proposals is such that they maintain the proportions of the existing building and would not have a negative impact on the host building nor the wider conservation area.

2.8 To the rear of the property a small lightwell is proposed as is three sets of double doors which will open out onto an existing courtyard. The proposed lightwell is to abut the rear boundary line of the property and project approx. 1.2m from the rear elevation of the building which fronts Great Russell Street. The lightwell, which is proposed to serve the existing basement, is to be approx. 2.6m in depth. Due to the adjacent buildings being very tall and therefore creating a boundary, the creation of the lightwell and the installation of double doors to the rear elevation would not be visible in the public realm and thus have no detrimental impact on the host property nor the wider conservation area.

3.0 Impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area

3.1 It is considered that the proposed extension relates well to the wider streetscene and conservation area as it respects and maintains the building height of surrounding properties. It is also considered that the overall scale, bulk and mass of the proposals are consistent with the host property and would not have a detrimental impact on the character of the wider conservation area. The proposed materials are similar to others within the local area, and therefore due to the detailed design, height, scale and bulk, the proposed extension is not considered to have a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the host building, nor that of the wider Bloomsbury Conservation Area.

4.0 Impact on transport and the highway

4.1 As per the previous application, Policy T8 seeks car-free housing in the Central London Area, the King's Cross Opportunity Area; Town Centres; and in other areas within Controlled Parking Zones that are easily accessible by public transport. The site is located in the Clear Zone Region where access to public transport is excellent (PTAL 6b). Not making the development car-free would increase demand for on-street parking in the Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ) the site is within. A S106 was issued for the previous application for both units to be made car-free in accordance with Policy T8. It is therefore considered that a Deed of Variation is needed to ensure that this element of the previous application is retained.

5.0 Amenity

5.1 The CAAC have raised a concern regarding the loss of amenity to the houses towards the rear of the application after the installation of the second floor extension. It is concluded from the scaled drawings as well as a site visit that the rear windows which serve the property to the rear would not be severely impeded through the installation of the proposal. It is also considered that the rear windows are already constrained due to the height of the surrounding windows and therefore it is not considered that the erection of the second storey roof extension would have a detrimental impact on the immediate neighbours in terms of loss of daylight/sunlight, privacy or outlook.

5.2 Additional windows are being added to the rear elevation of the proposed extension, which could lead to overlooking to

the houses to the rear. However, there are windows on the same elevation at a lower level windows and as they are located approx 10m away to the rear, which although is closer than CPG guidance, it is not considered that the proposal will worsen the existing situation in any way. An objection was received from a neighbour within Stedham Chambers in regards to overlooking. However due to the height of the existing building No 1. Coptic Street being between the application site and the objector's address, it is considered that no overlooking to this address would occur.

5.3 Therefore, the proposals are considered to comply with policy SD6.

6.0 Conclusion-

6.1 Although it is accepted that the proposals would be visible from public vantage points, it is also considered that the overall scale, bulk and mass of the proposals are consistent with the host property and would not have a detrimental impact in terms of design, scale or amenity on the host property or the wider conservation area. The proposal is therefore considered acceptable.

Recommendation: Grant Planning Permission subject to completion of a deed of variation to S106 Legal Agreement on 2009/1820/P for car-free housing.

DISCLAIMER

Decision route to be decided by nominated members on Monday 28th June 2010. For further information see

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