

Delegated Report (Members Briefing)		Analysis sheet		Expiry Date:	08/07/2010
		N/A		Consultation Expiry Date:	24/06/2010
Officer			Application Number(s)		
Jennifer Walsh			2010/2645/P		
Application Address			Drawing Numbers		
Pioneer House 46 Britannia Street London WC1X 9JH			Please refer to draft decision notice		
PO 3/4	Area Team Signature	C&UD	Authorised Officer Signature		
Proposal Erection of a five storey extension to the front of the existing mixed use building to provide 3 x one bedroom flats and 1 x studio flat (Class C3), along with cycle and refuse storage on the ground floor.					
Recommendation:		Grant Planning Permission subject to a section 106 agreement			
Application Type:		Full Planning Permission			
Conditions or Reasons for Refusal:		Refer to Draft Decision Notice			
Informatives:					

Consultations

Adjoining Occupiers:	No. notified	60	No. of responses No. Electronic	06 00	No. of objections	05
Summary of consultation responses:	<p>Flat 10, 50 Britannia Street objects to the application on the following grounds:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Not appropriate development for a conservation area. <i>(see para 3.1)</i> - Loss of light/physical impact on surrounding properties <i>(see para 5.4)</i> - Limited parking in the street already a serious problem <i>(see para 6.4)</i> - Does not provide any family accommodation <i>(see para 4.1)</i> - 46 Britannia Street is already a 'crowded' housing accommodation (with antisocial behaviours) adding extra units to it is detrimental. <i>(see para 4.1)</i> <p>Flat 10, 50 Britannia Street submitted a further objection on the following grounds:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - would damage the Conservation Area. <i>(see para 3.1)</i> - The building would cut off light to the existing building <i>(see para 5.4)</i> - The noise from the proposed building would affect everyone. <p>Flat 11, Pioneer House, object to the application on the following grounds:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A four storey building will block and narrow the already small space at the front of the building. <i>(see para 3.1)</i> - It poses a health and safety issue, a security issue and a noise problem - It will block the views and fresh air from existing windows. <i>(see para 5.1-5)</i> - Many people use the front courtyard – this will be lost. <i>(see para 1.1)</i> - They suffer from ill health and the works will add to this and they will have to move out. <p>Flat 37, Pioneer House, objects to the application on the following grounds:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rather than having a four storey extension, it would be nice to have facilities, for meeting points, and educational, religious and other useful spaces for residents to use. <p>Flat 38, Pioneer House, objects to the application on the following grounds:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 46 Britannia Street is very crowded with buildings and there is a big problem with noise. -The fourth floor has been broken into 4 times. -The erection of a four storey extension is going to add to the problems. -For 10 years the noise from the Kings Cross works has disturbed the residents. <p>One letter of support has been received which states:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -They support the application as they expect it will provide much needed housing. The plans will also improve the property. 					
CAAC/Local groups comments:	<p>Kings Cross Conservation Area Advisory Committee commented on the application as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A rather bleak building, but choice of bricks might make it acceptable. 					

Site Description

No 46 Britannia Street is a mixed use, 4 storey building with office use on the ground floor and residential above. It is located on the north side of Britannia Street, close to Grays Inn Road, and is set back behind a forecourt matching that of its neighbour at 48-50, compared to the adjoining office block at 34-44 to its east. It has a neighbouring listed building, the church school of St Judes, opposite on Britannia Street. The building is not listed but is located within the Kings Cross Conservation Area.

Relevant History

PSX0105020: The retention of two doors providing access to the communal terrace together with a privacy screen, at fourth floor level. **GRANTED 18/03/2002**

2009/0845/INVALID: Removal of Condition 1 regarding a privacy screen on the terrace attached to the planning permission dated 20/03/02 (PSX0105020) granted for the retention of two doors providing access to the communal terrace together with a privacy screen, at fourth floor level. **INVALID**

2009/2553/P: Erection of a 5 storey extension to the front of the existing mixed use building to provide 4 x one bedroom flats and cycle and refuse storage on the ground floor. **REFUSED**

Relevant policies

Camden's Replacement Unitary Development Plan 2006

SD1 – Quality of Life
SD2 – Planning obligations
SD6 – Amenity for occupiers and neighbours
SD9 – Resources and energy
H1 – New Housing
H7 – Lifetime homes and wheelchair housing
H8 – Mix of units
B1 – General design principles
B3 – Alterations and extensions
B7 – Conservation Areas
T1 – Sustainable transport
T3 – Pedestrians and Cycling
T7 – Off street parking
T8 - Car free housing and car capped housing
T9 - Impact of Parking
T12 – Works affecting highways

Camden Planning Guidance 2006

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
CS6 - Providing quality homes
CS11 - Promoting sustainable and efficient travel
CS14 - Promoting high quality places and conserving our heritage
CS13 - Tackling climate change through promoting higher environmental standards
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
DP5 - Housing size mix
DP6 - Lifetime homes and wheelchair homes
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
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

Assessment

1.0 The proposal

1.1 The application seeks to develop a ground plus four storey (with the fourth storey set back) extension over the existing front yard. The front area of the existing site is currently used to store the refuse bins and for unofficial cycle storage. The accommodation proposed consists of 3x one bedroom units and one studio apartment to be served from the existing staircase and lift core. There are large windows proposed to each apartment 1-3 on each elevation. The top floor studio apartment has large glazed doors opening up onto a small balcony area to the Britannia Street elevation. Exposed steel beams are proposed to the south west elevation and the windows are to be bronze powered coated aluminium. A green roof and two solar panels are also proposed. Bin storage and cycle parking are proposed to occupy the ground floor area. The refuse and recycling is proposed to be accessed from Wicklow Street as well as the internal existing courtyard area.

1.2 A previous application for this site was refused in August 2009, due to its height, bulk and detailed design as well as its scale and siting and in the absence of a legal agreement. The proposed scheme has been reduced in height, bulk and scale and the detailed design has also been amended.

1.3 Revisions have been received which show a window added to each floor on the north east elevation.

1.4 The main issues to consider are

- Design
- Impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area
- Internal Layout and mix of units
- Amenity
- Impact on transport and the highway

2.0 Design

2.1 The existing building consists of a ground plus three storey building, with a white render and an existing lift shaft which projects out into the front yard. The existing lift shaft has an existing rain shelter at the ground floor level, with the existing lift shaft being blue in colour and the rain shelter being orange. The existing building is slightly set back (approx 1 metre) off the building line with the neighbouring building.

2.2 The proposed extension is to project from the existing elevation of Pioneer house by 9.6m, which is up to the boundary line of the site. The proposed extension is to be 7.4 metres in width. The fourth floor projects by 8.3m with a balcony of 1m in depth, aligning with the front elevation. The proposed building is to sit approx. 2.5m lower than the existing height of Pioneer House.

2.3 The revised application has sought a more industrial feel, which is considered to maintain the rich Victorian industrial character of the surrounding buildings. The extension building is proposed to be built with London red stock brick, with gloss finished cladding panels to each of the windows to the south west elevation. The south east elevation (fronting Britannia Street) is proposed to have inset brick courses to the ground floor with three large windows and clear glass 'Juliet' balconies to each level. The north east elevation is to have two long glazed windows which abuts the existing building and three square windows to each level. A glazed door with access to the flats and a door with access to the refuse area are also proposed on this elevation.

2.4 It was considered within the previous application that there was scope to develop this forecourt plot if a suitable scheme was submitted. The revised scheme subject of this application is considered to preserve the character and appearance of the conservation area. The building has been reduced in scale and bulk and as such it is considered that the proposed building responds and relates to the wider area whilst not dominating the existing building. The proposal is

in line with the scale and context of the surrounding buildings and forms a balanced relationship to the buildings along Britannia Street, including the Listed Church which is opposite the site.

2.5 The detailed design of the scheme, with the exposed steel beams and the large exposed brickwork, preserves the areas industrial feel whilst relating to the existing buildings along the street. The windows are considered to respond well to the host property as well as the proportions of the proposed building and the wider area. The fourth floor, being adequately set back from the front and side elevations significantly reduces the dominance of the upper level; along with its mainly glazed façade, this reduces the impact of the additional floor when viewed from the street scene.

2.6 Two solar panels are proposed on the roof of the proposed extension as well as a green roof. Both measures are welcomed by the Council. A condition should be added to the permission to request details of the green roof to ensure viability of the proposal. It is not considered that the solar panels or the installation of a green roof would have any visible impact on the host building nor the wider conservation area. Both the solar panels and the green roof are therefore considered acceptable within this location.

2.7 The proposed extension can be viewed from the public realm along Britannia Street, Wicklow Street and Grays Inn Road. When the proposed location is viewed from Grays Inn Road, the modern office block to the east of the site (34-44 Britannia Street) is prominent with both its facades visible as this occupies the corner site across the road from the application site. The building on the corner of Britannia Street and Grays Inn Road (48-50 Britannia Street), is set back from the pavement line and as such allows wider views across the forecourt and two streets. It is considered that an extension on the front yard of Pioneer House is acceptable due to the existing predominant building line of Britannia Street. It is considered that through the implementation of the extension, the building line will be adapted yet respected as this forms an acceptable transition between 2 different building lines of neighbouring blocks.

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 street scene 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 of the host property or that 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 streetscene or the wider Kings Cross Conservation Area.

4.0 Internal layout and mix of units

4.1 The existing Policy H8 (mix of units) seeks a mix of units but does not go on to specify what the mix should be. Given the site and the location and the proposed tenure of the units, it is considered that the 3 x 1 bedroom units and the studio unit are acceptable in this location. The forthcoming LDF (DP5 – 'Homes of different sizes' of the Development Policies) is much more specific in terms of identifying housing need and securing a particular mix within a housing scheme. It states that it would expect a mix of large and small homes in all residential developments of 5 homes or more, whilst having regard to character of the site and the area, site size etc. Therefore, for this scheme of 4 units only, there would be no objection on the basis that the LDF had more weight or had been adopted.

4.2 As the scheme involves less than 5 units, there is no requirement to submit a Code for Sustainable Homes appraisal or make provision for open space or educational contributions.

4.3 Policy H7 requires all new dwellings, including conversions, to 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 standard 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.

4.4 The proposed use would comprise of 3x 1-bedroom (2-person) units, each having 56sqm of floor space. The Council's minimum floor area requirements for a 2 persons unit is 48sqm therefore each of the 1 bed units reach this standard. Each of the bedrooms also would comply with the minimum floor area standards for double rooms. The studio with 43sqm meets the standard for a 2 persons unit at 32sqm. The proposed ceilings are 2.4m which is 0.1m above the required standard of 2.3m.

5.0 Amenity

5.1 A reason for refusal on the previous application was due to the application failing to adequately demonstrate that there would be no material loss of daylight and sunlight to the windows serving bedrooms on the front elevation of Pioneer House. A daylight and sunlight report has been submitted in support of this application. This records that the VSC results confirm the great majority of daylight results to both proposed and immediately neighbouring windows will be above 27% or at least 0.8 the former value and in these cases the relevant BRE daylight guide criteria is satisfied and there would be no adverse affect. However, where VSC is below 0.8 the former value and in the case of all proposed accommodation it is usual to carry out the more comprehensive test of ADF.

5.2 These are stated in the report as confirming that all the proposed accommodation and all but two of the neighbouring bedrooms satisfy ADF criteria. Of the two that do not, room R1 at second floor has an ADF of 0.96 compared to the recommended 1.0 which, particularly for a bedroom, is "de minimus" and would not be a noticeable variation to the occupant. Even room R1 at first floor level remains reasonably good at ADF 0.88% for a bedroom. However as a further test recommended by the BRE guide, daylight distribution within the room was tested. The daylight distribution for room R1 at first floor level has an internal distribution of light at the working plane of 57%. This will barely change to 56% in the proposed condition. This would not be a noticeable variation to the occupant and is acceptable. In all locations sunlight easily satisfies UDP criteria of 25% annual and 5% winter availability.

5.3 Therefore, in summary the neighbouring bedroom windows are considered to wholly satisfy sunlight criteria and almost all criteria for daylight. However where two fall fractionally short on ADF standards, daylight distribution within the rooms is appropriate. Taken overall these bedrooms, with their central location, it is considered that the rooms would remain adequately lit.

5.4 With regard to the adjoining block of flats at 48-50, the proposal is well set back from the front façade, by the recommended 45 degree angle to protect daylight to adjoining occupiers, and should not have any adverse impact on daylight or outlook to these windows.

5.5 In general, the proposed scheme has been well designed to take account of such potential conflicts such as overlooking and loss of privacy through the orientation of window openings as well as the orientation of the building. 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, would have good access to natural light and ventilation. It is not considered that the proposal would have an impact on the occupiers of Pioneer House, nor other neighbouring properties in terms of loss of outlook, visual privacy or overlooking, and therefore the proposal is considered to be consistent with policy SD6.

6.0 Impact on transport and the highway

6.1 The site in the forecourt of no.46 Britannia Street is located in the junction of Britannia Street and Wicklow Street. This site is within the Clear Zone and has a Public Transport Accessibility Level (PTAL) of 6b (excellent).

6.2 It states in the application material that the existing forecourt is used as a refuse store and for cycle parking for the existing development at 46 Britannia Street, although the number of existing cycle parking spaces is not stated or shown on the existing ground floor plan. According to the proposed drawing, 32 secure cycle spaces have been provided. However, as the details of the size (floor area/ number of units) is not given for 46 Britannia Street, it is not possible to work out how many cycle parking spaces need to be provided. In the previous application, 24 cycle spaces were provided with 4 proposed units.

6.3 For this application, 4 of the spaces will need to be for additional units. Therefore it has been assumed that 28 of the spaces need to be re-provided. The cycle store proposed is not large enough to accommodate the required amount of cycle parking. However, there is sufficient space within the proposed layout to adequately include the required amount of cycle parking if the outside space on the ground is also used, therefore, a condition should be placed on the planning permission ensuring provision for a minimum of 32 cycle storage/parking spaces designed to Council specifications.

6.4 Due to the site benefitting from a PTAL rating of 6b (excellent) and as well as it being within a Controlled Parking Zone, it is considered that the 4 proposed units should be made 'car free' by Section 106 Legal Agreement. This would ensure that no additional pressure was placed upon the Controlled Parking Zone, which current overnight demand exceeds 90%. It is stated that 117 parking permits have been issued for every 100 estimated parking zone, which means that the parking zone is highly stressed. For car free and car capped developments, the Council will :

- not issue on-street parking permits;
- use planning obligations to ensure that future occupants are aware they are not entitled to on-street parking

- permits; and
- not grant planning permission for development that incorporates car parking spaces, other than spaces designated for people with disabilities, and a limited number of spaces for car capped housing in accordance with Council's Parking Standards.

6.5 This is a relatively large development in central London. The surrounding road network is narrow and therefore it is considered that a Construction Management Plan is required for this development. A CMP outlines how construction work will be carried out and how this work will be serviced (e.g. delivery of materials, set down and collection of skips), with the objective of minimising traffic disruption, avoiding dangerous situations and minimising the impact on local amenity. A CMP should cover both the demolition and construction phases of development. A CMP will need to be submitted and approved before any works start on site, and approval should be secured via a Section 106 planning obligation.

6.6 In order to mitigate the impact of the increase in trips this development will generate, and to tie the development into the surrounding urban environment, a financial contribution should be required to repave the footway adjacent to the site on Britannia Street and Wicklow Street. An added benefit of doing this is that any damage caused to the highway during construction can be repaired. 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. This s106 obligation should also require plans demonstrating interface levels between development thresholds and the Public Highway to be submitted to and approved by the Highway Authority prior to implementation. The Highway Authority reserves the right to construct the adjoining Public Highway (carriageway, footway and/or verge) to levels it considers appropriate. The Council will undertake all works within the highway reservation, at the cost to the developer. The Council have estimated the works to cost £7,243. Therefore, this will be a head of term within the section 106 legal agreement.

7.0 Conclusion-

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 design, bulk or amenity terms on the host property, adjoining properties or the wider conservation area. The proposal is therefore considered acceptable.

Recommendation: Grant Planning Permission subject to a section 106 agreement securing car-free housing for all four units, a Construction Management Plan and a financial contribution of £7243 to repave the surrounding footway.

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/>