

Delegated Report		Analysis sheet		Expiry Date:		08/07/2010	
(Members' Briefing)				Consultation Expiry Date:		16/06/2010	
Officer				Application Number(s)			
Jenny Fisher				1. 2010/2323/P 2. 2010/1383/L			
Application Address				Drawing Numbers			
36 Bedford Square & 16 Morwell Street London WC1B 3ES				Refer to decision letter			
PO 3/4		Area Team Signature		C&UD		Authorised Officer Signature	
Proposal(s)							
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Erection of temporary timber foot bridge to link the rear elevation of 36 Bedford Square and 16 Morwell Street, alteration of two windows to doors and removal of railings within the lightwell between the buildings. Works associated with the erection of temporary timber foot bridge to link the rear elevation of 36 Bedford Square and 16 Morwell Street including the alteration of two windows to doors and removal of railings within the lightwell between the buildings. 							
Recommendation(s):		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Grant planning permission with conditions Grant Listed Building consent with conditions 					
Application Type:		Full Planning Permission Listed building Consent					
Conditions or Reasons for Refusal:		Refer to Draft Decision Notice					
Informatives:							
Consultations							
Adjoining Occupiers:		No. notified	06	No. of responses	00	No. of objections	00
				No. Electronic	00		
Summary of consultation responses:		<u>English Heritage</u> Minded to grant listed building consent. G.O.L. signature of approval					
CAAC/Local groups* comments: <small>*Please Specify</small>		<u>Bloomsbury CAAC - Comment</u> The Committee was most concerned about the visual impact on the Grade 1 listed interiors of the Georgian house given such close proximity and do NOT consider that these works even on a <u>temporary</u> basis can be regarded as preserving their special architectural or historic interest. <u>Officer comment</u> <i>A detailed response is given in the assessment of the application below.</i>					

Site Description

This is one of 11 buildings forming the west side of Bedford Square. They comprise 3-storeys with attics and basements. Street numbers run consecutively. The building at the centre of the terrace (No. 32) is stuccoed; others are yellow stock brick with a plain stucco band. The buildings in Bedford Square form an important and complete example of 18th century town planning. No. 36 was acquired by the Architectural Association in 1927 and adapted as offices and members' rooms with studios added to the rear. No 16 Morwell Street is a 20th century mews-style building of some architectural quality comprising four storeys. It lies directly to the west of No 37 Bedford Square, the immediate neighbour to the south of No 36 Bedford Square, and in recent years has become studio space for the school of architecture. 36 Bedford Square is Grade 1 listed this and 16 Morwell Street are located within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area.

Relevant History

14/08/2007: listed building consent ref 2007/2984/L granted for No. 37 Bedford Square for formation of opening between front and rear rooms at ground floor level.

20/11/2008: planning permission ref 2008/4499/P granted for No. 16 Morwell Street for change of use of first, second and third floors from office use (Class B1) to an alternative use of either educational use (Class D1) or office use (Class B1).

22/09/2009: planning permission ref 2009/3483/P granted for Nos. 32-33 Bedford Square for change of use of basement, ground, first, second and third floors from office (Class B1) to an alternative use of either education (Class D1) or office (Class B1).

Relevant policies

Replacement Unitary Development Plan 2006

SD6 (amenity for occupiers and neighbours); B1 (general design principles); B3 (alterations and extensions); B6 (listed buildings); B7 (conservation areas)

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.

DP26 (managing the impact of development on occupiers and neighbours); DP24 (securing high quality design); DP25 (Conserving Camden's heritage); CS14 (promoting high quality places)

Camden Planning Guidance 2006

Bloomsbury C.A. Statement

Assessment

The Architectural Association School of Architecture (AA) has occupied Nos. 34, 35 & 36 Bedford Square for many decades, and recently acquired Nos. 32-33 and 37 Bedford Square and No. 16 Morwell Street. As a consequence of the recent acquisitions the AA now occupies a continuous row of five buildings in the Bedford Square terrace. However as the buildings are grade I listed it has not been possible to make lateral links through party walls between the three core buildings (Nos. 34-36) and Nos. 32-33 and No. 37 (Nos. 34, 35 and 36 have been linked for decades, prior to current planning legislation and guidance). As a consequence of the cellular nature of the AA's accommodation, the users of the more remote parts of the school, in this case No. 16 Morwell Street, currently have to exit their building onto Morwell Street and walk around the street block via the Bedford Square frontage in order to access the core building which houses the main school facilities (including the admin offices, library, lecture rooms, gallery spaces, workshops, canteen and last but not least the AA bar).

Proposed

The installation of a three pronged bridge at upper ground floor and first floor level in the lightwell between Nos. 36 Bedford Square and No 16 Morwell Street, immediately to the south of the rear extension of No. 36 which houses admin offices and which is topped by the bar terrace. The bridge has been designed by students on a the Emtech post-graduate architecture and engineering course, in conjunction with structural engineers Buro Happold who have tested the design and its structural integrity. It is anticipated that this bridge would have a two year life span; the school intends to design a replacement structure as a future student project.

The bridge would form a U shape and be constructed from multiple sections of laminated plywood and glass reinforced plastic fused together at high temperature. The top of each U -section would curve inwards in order to create a handrail on either side. The overall result would be a structure of an organic quality, essentially solid in nature. It would be completely open to the elements, ie without a roof cover. Rainwater would drain off the treads through prefabricated holes in risers, and the chance of slipping reduced by the ridged nature of large number of layers of timber forming each tread. Officers were able to inspect a model of the bridge at scale 1:5 during their site visit for this application.

The three connection points (A, B and C) to the existing buildings have been selected not only for their convenient locations but also because they are later 20th C. extensions to the grade I listed building, and of little architectural or historic interest. Thus no part of the historic Georgian terrace will be affected.

Brickwork would be removed beneath a window to rear or Morwell Street, (sheet 01/02- point B); beneath a window in a rear extension (sheet 02/02 point C) to create doors accessing the bridge. At point A the link would be to a flat roof of the rear extension to No. 36 just below the bar terrace.

The extremities of each of the three arms of the bridge will rest in a reversible fashion on the existing structures, each arm transferring its load vertically. Lateral stability will be provided by the 20th century Morwell Street building (ie well away from the main listed building). Where masonry is to be removed from window sills, it would be reinstated in a like-for-like manner after the removal of the bridge. A condition is recommended to ensure this is done. A section of the metal railing adjacent to the AA bar terrace (point A) would be removed; this is of no historic or architectural value and is therefore acceptable. Steel sections will be installed over brickwork at each support position to ensure that the bridge loads are not transferred into the masonry or window lintels at lower level. Steel sections would also be fitted with steel hangers (similar to joist hangers) to receive the bridge structure, and channels will be tied back into the floor structure as appropriate to prevent secondary torsional movements. Floor finishes would be reinstated accordingly. These are non-historic elements, but a condition for reinstatement of masonry outlined above is recommended.

Response to comment from the Bloomsbury CAAC

Despite its variety of activities, the School of Architecture understands the importance of these grade I listed buildings and continues to respect their special interest.

The listed internal space in closest proximity to the proposed structure would be the rear upper ground floor room of No. 36 Bedford Square used as a gallery space by the AA. The room retains its original plan form, some high quality plasterwork and joinery and a historic chimneypiece. However, since it is used as a gallery, decoration is essentially plain (painted white or neutral tones) and furnishing constantly changes.

The bridge would be positioned at a lower level so will have no visual impact on this space. The basement of No 36 will not be affected as it has already been extended into the courtyard by a workshop topped with a glass roof (20th Century and of little architectural value).

The proposed bridge structure would not directly touch the interior or exterior of the listed building. The bulk of the bridge would be where the three arms meet. This would be several metres away from the rear windows of the room in the courtyard space. The structure has been designed so that it respects both the exterior and the interior of the listed building. Indeed, its existence will indirectly help to preserve the interiors of the listed

building by removing the need for a lateral conversion between Nos 36 and 37 Bedford Square. The temporary and reversible nature of the bridge supports its viability within the setting of the listed buildings.

Installation

The bridge would be manufactured off site, structurally tested in the gardens of Bedford Square, and craned in one piece into position in the rear courtyard. Discussed with the Council's Transport Planners who advised a Construction Management Plan would not be required but the applicant should be informed that they will need to notify the Council's Highways Team.

It is considered that the proposed bridge would not harm the special historic interest of the building or character and appearance of the conservation are in line with UDP policies B1 (design), B3 (extensions), B6 (listed buildings) and B7 (conservation areas). No amenity issues affecting adjoining occupiers would be raised.

Recommend planning permission and listed building consent with additional conditions and informatives as discussed above.

The applicant has declared the structure would be temporary. Should approval be granted, a condition limiting the time allowed by planning approval and listed building consent is considered unnecessary. The Council raises no objection and as a consequence limiting the installation to a specific period would not be required.

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