

Delegated Report (Members Briefing)		Analysis sheet		Expiry Date:		11/05/2010	
		N/A / attached		Consultation Expiry Date:		9.4.10	
Officer				Application Number(s)			
Charles Thuaire				2009/5275/P			
Application Address				Drawing Numbers			
Royal Free Hospital Pond Street London NW3 2QG				See decision notice			
PO 3/4	Area Team Signature	C&UD	Authorised Officer Signature				
Proposal(s)							
Installation of new replacement gas compressor and associated ducting within the service yard (fronting Fleet Road) at hospital (Class D1)							
Recommendation(s):		Grant permission					
Application Type:		Full Planning Permission					
Conditions or Reasons for Refusal:		Refer to Draft Decision Notice					
Informatives:							
Consultations							
Adjoining Occupiers:		No. notified	65	No. of responses	05	No. of objections	03
				No. electronic	00		
Summary of consultation responses:		2 letters of support as it will reduce levels of current noise but concern about noise from construction works; will not affect their view from Pond Street. 3 objections as they already suffer from high noise levels and would object to anything that would increase this noise pollution and to an additional gas compressor (<i>officer note- the gas compressor replaces an existing one and would not increase noise levels above existing levels; a condition will be imposed to ensure this</i>)					
CAAC/Local groups* comments: *Please Specify		Mansfield CAAC comment- no objection in design grounds but note that residents nearby may well suffer detriment due to noise generation of new plant.					

Site Description

Site concerns the servicing yard facing Fleet Road which serves the whole of Royal Free Hospital. It contains in particular a large gas compressor unit with associated acoustic housing in the form of 2 large portacabin-like blue boxes placed on a concrete plinth on the area of service yard nearest the entrance off Fleet Road and adjoining the rear of a new block of flats at 12 Pond Street. Does not lie within a conservation area.

Relevant History

None relevant- in particular no decisions relating to the existing gas compressor

Relevant policies

Replacement Unitary Development Plan 2006

SD6 – Amenity for occupiers & neighbours

SD7 - pollution

SD8 - disturbance

B1 – General design principles

B3 – Alterations and additions

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

DP24 - Securing high quality design

DP26 - Managing the impact of development on occupiers and neighbours

DP28 - noise and vibration

Assessment

The existing compressor unit is redundant and lies adjoining a block of flats with windows directly facing it- it is not known whether these serve any habitable rooms. The existing unit comprises 2 separate cabins housing a gas compressor and a water cooler which serve the boiler house for the whole hospital. Due to improved technology, the proposal is to replace these with similar but smaller structures serving the same purpose but using more efficient and different equipment.

Design-

The existing acoustic enclosures total a length of 18.7m, width of 3.5 and a max height of 3.7m. They are painted blue and interlinked by piping in the middle. The new scheme involves a similar arrangement of 2 cabins linked by piping, with a total length of 13.4m, width of 2.1m and max height of 2.96m. The total package is thus substantially smaller than the existing structure in all dimensions of length, width and height; it is situated in the same location in the service yard in relation to the adjoining flats and street and still painted blue. It is considered that, as a utilitarian structure within a service yard, it remains acceptable in design and bulk terms and has less impact on the streetscene and neighbouring outlook than currently.

Noise-

An acoustic survey has been provided of background noise levels which show that the existing noise climate is very high at 60dBA, due to the existing hospital boiler house at the rear of this service yard. The agent advises that the previous/current noise level of the gas compressor is about 70 dBA and that the intention is to ensure that this is not exceeded, calculated at 1m away from the plant. Indeed due to improved technology, this is likely to be less in reality, ranging between 65 and 70 dBA, but due to nature of plant involved, it is considered that little more can be done to reduce noise emissions any further. Calculations of the noise levels 1m from the nearest residential windows 2.5m away from the gas compressor (ie. those in the block of flats) show that the levels will be 62-67dBa which is commensurate with the existing plant but 2-7 dBA higher than lowest background noise levels measured at nighttime.

In the circumstances, it is considered that this is acceptable on the basis that the existing high noise levels are not exceeded at all. It is accepted that the situation is unique in that very high background noise levels exist due to the hospital boiler house at the rear of the service yard and that they cannot be reduced further without affecting the hospital's functioning on a 24 hr basis. As the existing and proposed equipment will exceed the background noise level by 2-7 dBA, it is clearly inappropriate to impose the standard condition requiring it to be 5dBA lower than that, so instead it is proposed that the condition be reworded so that the existing maximum noise level of 67dBA (as measured 1m from the residential windows) is not exceeded.

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