

.Delegated Report		Analysis sheet		Expiry Date:		23/03/2010	
		N/A		Consultation Expiry Date:		10/03/2010	
Officer				Application Number(s)			
Jennifer Walsh				2010/0187/P 2010/0189/L			
Application Address				Drawing Numbers			
62 Doughty Street London WC1N 2JY				Please refer to the draft decision notice			
PO 3/4	Area Team Signature	C&UD	Authorised Officer Signature				
Proposal(s)							
Change of use of a grade II listed building from offices (class B1) to a single dwelling house (class C3). Alterations to include the removal of ground floor rear extension, installation of skylight at roof level, new staircase to basement, and installation of new front door and doors to rear elevation at basement level.							
Recommendation(s):		Grant Planning Permission subject to a section 106 agreement Grant Listed Building Consent					
Application Type:		Full Planning Permission Listed Building Consent					
Conditions or Reasons for Refusal:		Refer to Draft Decision Notice					
Informatives:							
Consultations							
Adjoining Occupiers:		No. notified	14	No. of responses	01	No. of objections	00
				No. electronic	00		
Summary of consultation responses:		One letter of support was received from 62 Doughty Street					
CAAC/Local groups comments:		No response has been received from Bloomsbury CAAC					

Site Description

The application site is a large Grade II listed property which originally dated from the early nineteenth century but it was rebuilt as a facsimile in the 1970s. It is located on the corner of Doughty Street and Roger Street. It is located within the Bloomsbury Conservation area.

Relevant History

None relevant

Relevant policies

Camden Replacement UDP 2006

SD2 Planning Obligations
SD6 Amenity for occupiers
H1 New Housing
B1 General design principles
B3 Alterations and extensions
B6 Listed Buildings
B7 Conservation Areas
E2 Retention of existing business uses

T3 Pedestrians & Cycling
T8 Car free housing and car capped housing
T9 Impact of Parking
T12 Works affecting highways
Appendix 6 Parking Standards

Camden Planning Guidance (2006)

Bloomsbury Conservation Area Statement

Assessment

Proposal: The application seeks planning permission and listed building consent for the change of use from office use (Class B1) to a single 6-7 bedroom residential unit (class C3) and associated alterations. Such alterations include:

- Demolition of the existing rear extension which was built over the garden in 1970
- Internal alterations associated to the change of use
- Creation of a new door way to the Roger Street elevation
- Alterations to the existing external staircase
- Alterations to the fenestration on the rear elevation at ground floor level

Revisions: Revisions have been received which show the asphalt roof being retained over the lightwell at basement level.

Land Use: Policy E2 – Retention of existing business use has a broad presumption against the loss of a business use on a site where there is potential for that use to continue. However, the supporting text does qualify that, and in this case paragraph 7.22 is particularly relevant. It states that as an exception to the general approach in E2, proposals for use of older office premises will be encouraged in appropriate locations if they involve the provision of permanent housing. We have previously considered Central London locations such as this to be appropriate locations given the surplus of office accommodation in and around Holborn. The building is Grade II listed, and general design principles encourage conversion of buildings back to their original intended use (in this case residential). The listed status of the building would also preclude the introduction of design features as outlined in paragraph 7.18 of the UDP that may allow conversion from straight office use, to flexible space for a range of employment uses.

In this case the applicants consider that a significant amount of refurbishment would be required to bring the offices up to modern day requirements. They have provided a statement which outlines the reasons as to why the property is unsuitable for conversion to a modern office. The building is also a listed building and therefore the building is subject to further conservation constraints which prevent it from being used as flexible office space. As a result the applicants contend that the building is not suitable for flexible business use, and by converting the building back to its original intended use, many original features can be restored and the modern alterations made for the office accommodation may be removed.

Policy H1 states that the Council will grant planning permission for development that increases the amount of land and floor space in residential use. Given that the building is unlikely to be suitable for continuation of any business use other than B1(a) offices, the loss is acceptable subject to a suitable use being proposed. The reinstatement of residential accommodation is welcomed and would comply with Policy E2 and H1 of the adopted Replacement UDP 2006.

Standard of accommodation: The proposed use would comprise a 6-7-bedroom (14-person) single residential dwelling. It would provide approximately 560 sq.m of floor space. The Council's minimum floor area requirements do not extend to an 14 person dwelling; however, the proposal would substantially exceed the minimum overall floor area requirement for a 6-person dwelling (93 sq.m). Each of the bedrooms would comply with the minimum floor area standards for double rooms.

Lifetime homes standards: Policy H7 requires all new dwellings, including conversions, to be built to Lifetime Homes standards wherever possible. The applicants have submitted an assessment of Lifetime Homes compliance as part of their Design and Access Statement. Given the constraints involved the detail submitted is acceptable, as it is unlikely that all of the 16 criteria can be met given this is a conversion within a listed building.

Design

Internal alterations: The interior of the building has been completely rebuilt and although period decoration has been applied this is not convincing. Given that the interior is entirely non original and therefore no historic fabric is harmed then in principle there is no objection to the works. The applicants have submitted a photographic schedule which provides evidence and confirms that the interior is non original. Generally the works are respectful of the intended lay out of the building (e.g. maintaining a discernable division between front and rear rooms) and maintains the stair in its original position. Therefore the hierarchy and proportions of the rooms on the respective levels is maintained. It is proposed to insulate the internal face of the exterior wall which will result in a greater wall thickness. Shutters would be installed and secondary glazing added but from the outside the appearance of the building would be unaltered. It is therefore considered that the special interest of the building is preserved and the proposed internal alterations are considered acceptable in this location.

External alterations: The main elevations on Doughty Street and Roger Street remain largely unchanged. The rear wing of the building actually has the appearance of a separate building due to the difference in levels and there is no objection in principle to the erection of a door in the Roger Street façade. This element of the property has the proportions and fenestration of a front facade and is stepped back further from the street. However the proposed design for the front door opening is unconvincing and could be improved. There is no objection to a four panel door and doorlight above, however the splayed soldier course above should be removed and a semi circular fan light introduced. A condition and informative are recommended to be attached to the permission requesting details of the proposed fenestration details to secure a semi circular fan light should be applied to the decision notice.

A new stair to the front lightwell is proposed. Although there is an existing staircase which abuts the front elevation of the property, it is proposed to move the stairs to the other side of the lightwell to allow more light into the basement windows. Due to the front elevation being clearly visible from the public realm more details of this part of the application are required of this and therefore, this additional information will be requested through the use of a condition. This is to ensure that the proposed stairs do not have a detrimental impact on the Listed building, or the wider streetscene.

In the rear area of the building there is a modern single storey part glazed structure. It is proposed to demolish this and return this space back to a garden for the building (historic maps show this space as originally being open). The existing structure is not of any merit and its removal and the reinstatement of the garden is welcomed as an improvement to the building.

Facing onto the rear garden it is proposed to install sliding doors. Due to this part of the application site being a non original part of a building in a completely rebuilt property it is considered that the proposed works do not have a harmful effect on the building. The area to the rear is surrounded by high garden walls and therefore the proposed garden would be enclosed. Camden Planning Guidance states that, wherever practical, all new dwellings should have access to private outdoor amenity space. Therefore the proposal to create a secure rear private garden area of approximately 70sqm is welcomed within this proposal.

The two lower sashes at the rear ground floor level are to be replaced with glazed doors which would closely match the appearance of the doors. This is non original fabric and would have a minimal visual impact on the surrounding area, therefore it is considered acceptable. There would be access from the proposed Kitchen at ground floor level into the garden. A grated cover is proposed to create an access over the existing basement lightwell. Although this is a modern addition, it is not considered to harm the special interest of the historical building, and is therefore considered acceptable within this location. It is also considered that this is a practical design which provides access to the garden whilst not compromising the light to the basement level.

Amenity: 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. The proposals are considered to have appropriate regard to the CPG and policy SD6 of the Replacement UDP. Due to the proposal not including any extensions, the proposed works do not raise any amenity concerns in terms of their impact on neighbours. Although the rear area is to be opened up and used as a garden, it is considered that due to the height of the existing boundary party walls, not amenity issues will arise through the implementation of the scheme.

Transport and parking: The site is located on the corner of Doughty Street and Roger Street within the Clear Zone Region. There is no vehicular access to the site and none is proposed. The site has a Public Transport Accessibility Level (PTAL) of 6a (excellent).

Cycle Parking UDP policy T3 requires development to sufficiently provide for the needs of cyclists, which includes cycle parking and UDP policy T7 states development must comply with Camden Parking standards. The London Plan also adopts the Transport for London cycle parking standards.

Camden's Parking Standards for cycles (Appendix 6 of the Unitary Development Plan), states that 1 storage or parking space is required per residential unit, however for larger residential units (3+ beds), the London plan requires 2 cycle parking spaces per unit. The proposal is for a single dwelling house with 6 bedrooms; therefore 2 cycle storage/parking spaces are required. The applicant has included provision for the required amount of cycle storage/parking in a secure store in the garden with level access from the street. This facility had no stands but since it can only be accessed by the residents living in the house, it is considered that this proposal meets Camden's cycle parking standards.

Given that The London Plan Consolidated with Alterations since 2004 (February 2008) should be taken into consideration (policies 3C.1, 3C.17 and 3C.23) as well as the UDP (policies T1, T8 and T9) and to some extent Camden's Draft LDF Development Policies (draft policy DP18); car-free should not only be sought for housing but also for developments in general and should be ensured by Boroughs in areas of high public transport accessibility. Therefore, this development should be made car-free through a Section 106 planning obligation for the following reasons:

- The site has a Public Transport Accessibility Level of (PTAL) of 6a (excellent) and is within a Controlled Parking Zone.
- The site is within the "Clear Zone Region", for which the whole area is considered to suffer from parking stress.
- Not making the development car-free would increase demand for on-street parking in the Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ) the site is within. This is considered unacceptable in CPZ's that are highly stressed where overnight demand exceeds 90%. Kings Cross (CA-D) CPZ operates Mon-Fri 08:30-18:30, Sat 08:30-13:30 and 117 parking permits have been issued for every 100 estimated parking bays within the zone. This means that this CPZ is highly stressed.

For car free and car capped development, 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.

Therefore, given the limited nature of parking availability within the area, in order to be acceptable in transport terms, this new residential unit is recommended to be designated car-free, in that future occupiers will not be eligible for on-street parking permits. This shall be secured via a S.106 agreement.

Recommendation:

Grant Planning Permission subject to Section 106 agreement

Grant Listed Building Consent

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