

DISCLAIMER

Decision route to be decided by nominated members on Monday 7th September 2009. For further information see

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

Delegated Report (Members Briefing)		Analysis sheet	Expiry Date:	03/09/2009
		N/A / attached	Consultation Expiry Date:	19/08/2009
Officer			Application Number(s)	
Elaine Quigley			(i) 2009/2697/P (ii) 2009/2701/L	
Application Address			Drawing Numbers	
2 Queen Square London WC1N 3AR			See draft decision notice	
PO 3/4	Area Team Signature	C&UD	Authorised Officer Signature	
Proposal(s)				
(i) Change of use and works of conversion from office (Class B1) to a single family dwelling (Class C3), replacement of existing roof and stair enclosure by a new mansard roof and glazed enclosure and window alterations at rear. (ii) Internal and external alterations for change of use and works of conversion from office (Class B1) to a single family dwelling (Class C3), replacement of existing roof and stair enclosure by a new mansard roof and glazed enclosure and window alterations at rear.				
Recommendation(s):		(i) Grant planning permission subject to s106 agreement for car-free development (ii) Grant listed building consent subject to 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	08	No. of responses	00	No. of objections	00
			No. Electronic	00		
Summary of consultation responses:	None received					
CAAC/Local groups* comments: *Please Specify	Bloomsbury CAAC – object Generally application is positive but is let down by the new glazed stair enclosure and roof terrace. If the roof was a conventional mansard without these features it could be supported. See paragraph 2.6 to 2.7					

Site Description

The application site is located on the west side of Queen Square in close proximity to the junction with Cosmo Place to the south. The site comprises an end of terrace four storey building with basement and roof accommodation. The building is a Grade II listed building that was constructed in the early c19th but has been substantially altered in the 1970's with inappropriate roof additions, internal openings in the party wall and stripping of interior features. It would appear that the building was used as an annexe to the neighbouring office building at 3-5 Queen Square. A new staircase was installed in place of the original that extends through the roof to serve the taller office building. The ground and first floors appear to have been in office use with the upper floors of the building used as ancillary residential accommodation with separate kitchens and bathrooms.

The property forms part of a terrace of buildings that front onto Queen Square that is a public area of open space. To the south of the site is no. 1 Queen Street (The Queens Larder Public House) that is a Grade II listed building. To the north is a six storey 1960s/1970's office building that has recently been granted consent for conversion of the upper floors to residential use. To the west is no. 13 Cosmo Place that is a three storey mid terrace building. The surrounding area is characterised by a mix of office and residential uses.

Relevant History

No relevant history associated with the site

3-5 Queen Square

02/06/2009 - Planning permission was granted for the part change of use and works of conversion from office (Class B1) to residential (Class C3) at third to fifth floors to provide 1x 1bed unit, 1x 2bed unit, 1x 3bed unit and 1x 4-bed unit, rear extensions at basement to fifth floor level including the erection of balconies to the rear elevation and other associated works (2008/4999/P).

Relevant policies

Replacement Unitary Development Plan (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)

Car free and car capped housing; Conservation areas; Cycle access - parking and storage; Daylight and sunlight; extensions, alterations and conservatories; Lifetime homes and wheelchair housing; Listed buildings; Overlooking and privacy; Parking stress – residents' parking on-street; Planning obligations – General guidance relating to all developments; Residential development standards; Roofs and terraces.

Bloomsbury (1) revised draft published April 2008

Bloomsbury – West Side (1a)

Assessment

1.0 Proposal

1.1 Planning permission and listed building consent are sought for the change of use and works of conversion from office (Class B1) to a single family dwelling (Class C3), replacement of existing roof and stair enclosure by a new mansard roof and glazed enclosure and window alterations at rear. The works would include:

- Replacement of the existing modern mansard roof and glass stair enclosure with a more traditional mansard roof with reclaimed slates and glass stair enclosure of a similar foot print
- Installation of two new lead clad dormer windows in the front of the mansard and one dormer window in the rear elevation
- Raising the front parapet wall to match the height of the neighbouring property
- Reinstatement of chimney and installation of gable wall to mansard
- Installation of a new timber handrail on the front and glass balustrade at the rear
- It is proposed to replace the windows in the rear elevations with new timber sash windows and enlarge the window openings in the ground floor rear elevation.
- Basement and ground floor windows in the front elevation to be replaced with new matching double glazed timber sash windows
- Replacement of steel base to balcony on front elevation at first floor level with new ornamental white painted concrete base
- The internal works would include replacement of the modern internal staircase within the rear part of the building and removal of the centrally located modern staircase from ground to first floor levels. It is proposed to remove modern partitions and install new partition walls to reinstate the more traditional plan form of a Georgian property.
- Lower the existing floor level in the basement and vaults to provide additional headroom for the new habitable floor space.
- Removal of paintwork from the front façade and repair to brickwork

Revisions

1.2 Following discussions with the Council the proposal has been revised to reduce the height of the proposed glass enclosure at roof level from 4.3m to 3.5m (800mm) from the base of the roof to the apex of the enclosure and 200mm on the front elevation. The applicants have advised that any reduction in the height of the enclosure is constrained by the need to provide adequate ventilation to the staircase through the roof light openings and to provide adequate head room to the stair case.

2.0 Issues

2.1 The main considerations material to the determination of the application are:

- Loss of office accommodation/provision of residential accommodation
- Standard of accommodation
- Lifetime homes standards
- Design
- Amenity
- Highway issues
- Historic building issues

Loss of office accommodation/provision of residential accommodation

2.2 Policy E2 has a general presumption against the loss of business uses where there is potential for that use to continue. Where it is considered that a site does not have potential to continue the existing business use, consideration needs to be given to maintaining on site an alternative business use, with priority given to flexible space for B8 or B1c light industry.

2.3 The applicants have submitted a detailed justification outlining why they felt a loss of office floor space is acceptable in this instance. In particular, the applicants have identified that the office lack modern services which would make the premises attractive to potential occupiers including lack of internal lift, small size of floor plate and stepped entrance access. Taking these issues into consideration, the existing office floor space is not flexible space, and, given the buildings listed status, it would be difficult for it to be adapted for the needs of light industry (B1c) or storage and distribution purposes (B8). 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.

Standard of accommodation

2.4 The proposed use would comprise a 3 bedroom (6 person) single family dwelling. It would provide approximately 240 sq m of floor space. The Council's minimum floor area requirements for a 6 person dwelling is 93 sq. m. The proposal would substantially exceed the minimum overall floor area requirement and is considered acceptable. Each of the bedrooms would comply with the minimum floor area standards for double rooms. The proposal would create an acceptable standard of accommodation in terms of natural lighting to each of the habitable rooms as they would be served by the existing windows in the upper floors of the front and rear elevations of the building.

Lifetime Homes standards

2.5 Policy H7 requires all new dwellings, including conversions, to be built to Lifetime Homes standards wherever possible. The adopted CPG advises that listed buildings should incorporate accessible features. Given the architectural significance of the building as a Grade II listed building, it would not be feasible to make alterations to the internal arrangement of the floors to ensure compliance with all Lifetime Homes standards, as this would harm the historic fabric of the building. However, it is recommended that an informative should be attached encouraging the applicant to meet the standards where possible.

Design

2.6 It is proposed to remove the existing modern mansard and stair enclosure on the roof and install a more traditionally designed mansard roof and a new stair enclosure that would provide a seating area and access to an external amenity space on the roof. The existing mansard roof is single pitched and is set at 58 degrees. It is proposed to replace it with a traditional double pitched mansard that would be clad in natural slates. The replacement of the mansard would be considered of benefit to the appearance of the building and the character and appearance of the Bloomsbury conservation area. The new roof features a more traditional mansard profile and the dormers relate well to the building below.

2.7 The existing glass extension above the existing mansard is rather incongruous (it originally served as a fire escape to the neighbouring building at 3-5 Queen Square); its reconfiguration using a simple structural glazing system would represent an improvement to the appearance and character of the building. The reduction in the height to the front and rear of the glass enclosure would reduce the overall bulk of the extension when viewed from the street. The removal of the existing roof structure and its replacement with a smaller structure that is to be constructed using glass that is a more lightweight transparent structure is considered to enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

Amenity

2.8 The rear of the site is bound by properties that are in residential and office use. The properties along Cosmo Place are immediately adjoining the site and include residential flats. The overall height of the mansard roof would remain the same as the existing and the height of the glazed staircase enclosure would be reduced by 800mm. The proposal would not have an adverse impact on the amenity of the adjoining properties in terms of daylight or sunlight and would be considered acceptable.

2.9 The proposal would include the creation of an internal seating area at fifth floor level as part of the glazed staircase enclosure. A new roof terrace would also be created within the mansard roof. The property to the rear of the site at 13 Cosmo Place is a three storey building with a mansard roof and roof terrace towards the front part of the roof. The proposed seating area may result in oblique views of the rear elevation of the adjoining properties along Cosmo Place especially the upper floors and roof terrace of no. 13 Cosmo Place. However they would not result in direct overlooking of the windows in the rear elevations of these properties. The proposal would not result in adverse impacts on the amenity of the adjoining occupiers in terms of overlooking.

2.10 A small area of amenity space would be created for the dwelling in the form of an open roof terrace within the new mansard roof. The proposal would create an outside seating area at roof level. This would provide approximately 12 sq. m of private external amenity space. This would be considered as an acceptable standard of amenity space for the proposed residential dwelling within this Central London location.

Highway Issues

Car free housing

2.11 The site is within the Central London Area and has a Public Transport Accessibility Level of 6a (Excellent). The site is also within a Clear Zone Region for which the whole surrounding area is considered to suffer from parking stress. The site is therefore considered to be suitable for car free housing. It is recommended that any approval of the residential scheme be subject to a section 106 agreement for car free housing.

Cycle parking

2.12 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. The proposal is for 1 residential unit; therefore 1 cycle storage/parking space is required. The applicant has not included provision for the required amount of cycle storage/parking in the proposed design. However, the proposals are for a large single dwelling house with

ground floor access and a cycle can easily be stored within it, if required, and therefore Camden's parking standards for cycles would be met.

Works affecting highways

2.13 The site is constrained in terms of the capacity of the surrounding road network. However a Construction Management Plan (CMP) would not be required as the extent of the works and nature and location of the site would not warrant it.

Historic building issues

2.14 The building has been comprehensively altered internally and retains no original features. Although there is no planning history relating to any previous internal works, it appears that the entire internal structure including the stairs have been replaced in 1970's with only the facades retained and supported by a steel frame. The alterations proposed seek to reinstate a more appropriate plan form, which is welcomed in listed building terms.

2.15 It is noted that the windows are to be replaced with double glazed slimlite sashes. The windows would have integral glazing bars which would be 16mm wide with each pane held in place by putty. The gap between panes would be 4mm so the impact of the spacer would be negligible. Externally the appearance would be the same as the existing. It is only in close up inspection from within the property that it would be apparent that the windows were double glazed. The interior of the building is entirely rebuilt so the only harmful element of the proposed sash windows (the spacer and gap between panes) would be viewed in the context of an interior of no historic or architectural interest. The building's special interest lies entirely with its exterior and in this view the appearance of the building would be maintained.

2.16 Normally double glazing would not be acceptable in a listed building. However given the heavily altered nature of the building and the design of the replacement it would be difficult to resist (the existing sashes are not original). The submitted details show an acceptable appearance for the sash windows and glazing bars so in these exceptional circumstances it is considered acceptable.

2.17 The removal of the paintwork from the front façade is welcomed as an improvement to the building. As yet no precise method statement is available for this and the condition of the brickwork below is unknown. The details of the method of cleaning would be required by condition.

2.18 The balcony at first floor level is to be refurbished. The railings themselves appear to be original but the metal grille floor appears to be a much more recent addition. A new stone balcony floor with the refurbished railings would be welcomed as an improvement to the appearance of the building. Details have been submitted as part of the proposal and are considered acceptable.

The works to the basement and vaults would not be considered to harm the special character or appearance of the listed building and would be considered acceptable.

2.19 English Heritage has advised that the proposal should be assessed against the Council's UDP policies. Confirmation has been received that the Secretary of State for London would not be directing reference of the application to him.

Conclusion

2.20 Grant planning permission subject to s106 agreement and listed building consent subject to conditions