

Delegated Report		Analysis sheet		Expiry Date:	03/07/2009
		N/A		Consultation Expiry Date:	09/06/2009
Officer			Application Numbers		
John Sheehy			2009/2134/P		
Application Address			Drawing Numbers		
Carriageway adjacent to Christ the King Church Byng Place London WC1			Refer to draft decision		
PO 3/4	Area Team Signature	C&UD	Authorised Officer Signature		
Proposals					
Installation on carriageway of a cycle hire docking station including a registration/payment terminal and maximum of 33 docking points for bicycles, in connection with the Transport for London Cycle Hire Scheme.					
Recommendation:		Refuse permission			
Application Type:		Full Planning Permission			

Conditions or Reasons for Refusal:	Refer to Draft Decision Notice					
Informatives:						
Consultations						
Adjoining Occupiers:	No. notified	0	No. of responses	1	No. of objections	0
			No. electronic	0		
Summary of consultation responses:	<p>Three Site Notices erected - 1 adjacent to site at Byng Place, 1 on corner of Byng Place and Gordon Square and 1 on corner of Byng Place and Torrington Square.</p> <p>Comment received from flat 3 Gordon Square: Docking station should be sited in front of 1 Byng Place (Courtauld House), this would allow retention of trees and bench seating in situ.</p> <p>English Heritage: “No 1 Byng Place dates from 1832, and was built by Thomas Cubitt, a developer with important historic associations for the building of Regency London. The Church of Christ the King was built twenty years later to the designs of JR Brandon for the Catholic Apostolic Church. The three telephone kiosks were designed by George Gilbert Scott (2 KS's and a K6) and date from 1927 and 1935. Although dating from different periods and representing different architectural styles the combination of historic buildings and structures forms a pleasing whole within which each architectural element is identified as being of architectural and historic interest in its own right. In this instance the combination of listed buildings and structures is such that introducing additional clutter directly into the setting will inevitably obscure views of elements which are considered to contribute to the historic character and appearance.</p> <p>The proposal must be considered against the guidance set out in PPG15. Paragraph 2.17 of PPG 15 states that: "The setting of individual listed buildings very often owes its character to the harmony produced by a particular grouping of buildings (not necessarily all of great individual merit) and to the quality of the spaces created between them. Such areas require careful appraisal when proposals for development are under consideration".</p> <p>The chosen location is directly in front of the Grade I listed church and will obscure views of its railings, which are also considered to contribute to the aesthetic architectural interest of the building. The site is also bounded on the west side by the Grade II listed 1 Byng Place and its railings. The location also obscures views of the three listed telephone boxes situated on the pavement. The design statement which accompanies the applications acknowledges the existence of the listed buildings but concludes that the scale of the church is such that it's interest is not diminished by the addition of the cycle station. This fails to take into account the importance of the associated railings, the impact on the currently clear sight lines across Byng Place, and the impact on the site as a group of individual architectural and historic elements.”</p>					

<p>CAAC/Local groups comments:</p>	<p>Bloomsbury CAAC: Object due to impact on pedestrian movement.</p> <p>Gordon Mansions Residents Association: Object due to potential conflict between pedestrians and cyclists as the docking station would be on a strong 'desire line'; the proposal conflicts with the agreed Streets for People scheme; other side of Byng Place would be a better location, or Malet St.</p>
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Site Description

A triangular area of the public realm at the northwestern corner of Byng Place adjacent to the pedestrian footway which runs along the edge of the space. A cycle route passes diagonally through the area south of the application site, which is not accessible to vehicular traffic.

The northern side of this corner of Byng Place is occupied by the grade I listed University Church; the western side is occupied by the grade II listed Courtauld House which would appear to have an established use as a non-residential institution (Class D1). The railings of both buildings are included in the listing description. Three Grade II listed telephone kiosks are located on the footway adjacent to the site.

The site is located within Bloomsbury Conservation Area.

Relevant History

None

Relevant policies

Camden Development Plan 2006

SD1 Quality of life
SD6 Amenity for occupiers and neighbours
B1 General design principles
B3 Alterations and extensions
B6 Listed Buildings
B7 Conservation Areas
N8 Ancient Woodlands and Trees
T1 Sustainable Transport
T3 Pedestrians and Cycling
T7 Off-street parking, city car clubs and city bike schemes
T9 Impact of parking
T12 Works affecting highways

Camden Planning Guidance 2006

Bloomsbury Conservation Area Statement

The London Plan 2004

2A.1 (Sustainability criteria)
3C. 3 (Sustainable transport in London)
3C. 1 (Integrating Transport and Development)
3C. 9 (Increasing the capacity, quality and integration of public transport)
3C. 17 (Tackling congestion and reducing traffic)
3C. 18 (Street space)
3C.22 (Improving conditions for cycling)
4B.1 (Design principles for a compact city)
4B.5 (Creating an inclusive environment)

Assessment

Proposal: installation on the carriageway of a cycle hire station with a maximum of 33 docking points in connection with the Transport for London Cycle Hire Scheme, the main features of which would be as follows:

- the cycle hire station would be made up of a terminal 2.40m in height and docking points 0.85m in height. These would be located on a pavement build out 2.0m in width and 26.5m in length;
- the terminal would be located at the eastern end of the cycle hire station with the docking points spaced at 0.75m intervals;
- the terminal would have a rectangular footprint (measuring 0.50m x 0.35m). The docking points would have an oval footprint (measuring 0.13m width and 0.35m in length);
- the existing pedestrian footway on the northern side of Byng Place is 3.5m wide, this width would be retained as existing;
- the cycles would be oriented with the front wheels facing the inside of the pavement;
- the pavement would match the existing adjacent surface treatment.

As no service provider has been appointed by Transport for London some aspects of the scheme are indicative at this stage.

Assessment

Conservation & Design

The proposed cycle hire station would be located within the setting of 2 important listed buildings and 3 listed telephone kiosks in an attractive part of Byng Place with considerable pedestrian footfall which includes benches, provides a moment of space in a busy area and forms a good quality setting to the setting important grade I listed church, the 3 listed telephone kiosks and the grade II listed Courtauld House. Due to its size, form, location and design the cycle hire station is considered to unnecessarily crowd and clutter the space. The cycle hire station is considered to encroach on the setting of all of the listed structures and detract from the quality of the public realm.

The indicative drawings indicate that the body of the terminal and docking points would be black with stainless steel or aluminium trim and base. The docking points would terminate with a slanted top element where the ticket reader would be positioned. There are concerns that the trim and base would be particularly prone to damage and need to be as durable as possible to preserve the long term appearance of the features. Were the application to be recommended for approval, the finish of the trim and base could be controlled by condition and therefore this is not considered to constitute a reason for refusal of the application.

Transport

As the Cycle Hire Station would be located on a build out into the carriageway there would be no permanent obstructions to the footway. However, the desire line for pedestrians is to not follow the raised footway, but a route adjacent to the cycle lane, using the lower level area of the public open space. Although the docking stations are permeable, they would run perpendicular to the edge of the open space and would therefore present a barrier to pedestrians using this desire line. Pedestrians would be inclined to walk around the docking station via the cycle lanes and so would be in the path of oncoming cyclists. This is considered to be unacceptable in transport terms.

Amenity

The Cycle Hire station is not, in itself, considered to result in a loss of neighbour amenity as it would only be illuminated when in use and would not be likely to generate a significant amount of noise or other disturbance. It is considered that the proposal would not have a detrimental impact on the amenity of neighbouring occupiers.

Access

The proposal retains a sufficient width of pavement in accordance with BS8300:2009 Design Guidance. The height of the docking points (0.85m) does not meet TfL design 'Inclusive Mobility' guidance which recommends that bollards and other free standing objects should be at least 1000mm in height. There is a potential safety hazard to pedestrians, however it is considered that in this instance this height is acceptable because the docking stations would not disrupt the main flow of pedestrians on the footway.

Community Safety

The cycle hire station would be located in a large, open area with heavy vehicular traffic, cyclists and pedestrians all through the day and evening. It is therefore considered that the proposal would not have a detrimental impact on crime, anti-social behaviour or community safety.

Trees

The proposal would involve the removal of 4 small trees on the northern portion of this corner of Byng Place. The applicant has stated that the removal of these trees has already been agreed under the Bloomsbury Streets for People Scheme, approved by the Council in October 2008, and did not provide an arboricultural report with the application. However, while the Streets for People Scheme has been agreed in principle, the detailed design for Byng Place has not yet been finalised and agreed. The removal of these trees has therefore not been agreed. In the absence of an Arboricultural Report the Council has insufficient evidence to assess the quality and amenity value of these trees and whether their removal would be acceptable in planning terms.

Recommendation: Refuse permission on Conservation and Design, Transport and Landscape grounds.

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