

DISCLAIMER

Decision route to be decided by nominated members on Monday 25th February 2008. 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:		08/02/2008	
				Consultation Expiry Date:		18/02/2008	
Officer				Application Number(s)			
Jenny Fisher				2007/6289/P			
Application Address				Drawing Numbers			
Front Lawn (West) British Museum Great Russell Street London WC1B 3DG				See decision notice			
PO 3/4	Area Team Signature	C&UD	Authorised Officer Signature				
Proposal(s)							
Erection of trellis and ground works associated with formation of a Chinese Garden for a temporary period from 01/05/2008 to 31/12/2008.							
Recommendation(s):		Grant planning permission for a limited period					
Application Type:		Full Planning Permission					
Conditions:							
Informatives:		Refer to Draft Decision Notice					
Consultations							
Adjoining Occupiers:		No. notified	00	No. of responses No. Electronic	00 00	No. of objections	00
Summary of consultation responses:		Site notice displayed – no response received					

<p>CAAC comments:</p>	<p><u>Bloomsbury CAAC</u> This seems a wholly inappropriate concept for the front of the British Museum, which is one of few truly monumental and dignified buildings in London. We are bemused by the positive reporting of the African Garden, which in practice was badly maintained with tropical plant shrivelling up in the hot summer sun. The lawn itself should be given proper maintenance and left at that. The occasion of the Beijing Olympics does not need to be recorded here – local residents are already feeling apprehensive about the effect on the area of the London Olympics.</p> <p><i><u>Officer comment:</u> The garden would be retained for a temporary period only. It would be similar to the African Garden created in 2005. The applicant has submitted details of the proposed landscaping and also the manner in which the lawn would be restored following the removal of plants and landscaped areas. The applicant has also described how the plants would be transplanted to a local public square.</i></p> <p><u>English Heritage</u> Specialist staff have considered the information received, and do not wish to offer any comments.</p>
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Site Description

The British Museum is a Grade 1 listed building bounded to the north by Montague Place, to the east by Montague Street, to the west by Bloomsbury Street and to the south by Great Russell Street. There are large rectangular shaped lawns on either side of the main entrance into the Museum. Located within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area.

Relevant History

18/03/2005 [2005/0514/P]

PP granted for the formation of an African Garden, including screens, timber path and planting to the existing lawn for a temporary period between 28th April 2005 and 30th September 2005, subject to a condition limiting the retention of the works to the temporary period only, and requiring that the lawn be reinstated in accordance with details to be approved, by 30th September 2005.

Relevant policies

Replacement UDP 2006 S1/S2, SD1, SD6, B1, B6, B7

Camden Planning Guidance 2006: conservation areas; design; listed buildings

Bloomsbury Conservation Area Statement

Assessment

Proposed is a Chinese landscaped area as a temporary installation (May – December 2008). The proposal follows discussions and collaboration with the Royal Botanic Gardens Kew and Camden Parks and Open Spaces Team.

Entering through the main Museum gates, the area that would be planted is the left. Plants would be of various heights ranging from ground shrubs to a 5m high Dawn Redwood. Also proposed is a bamboo trellis 6m x 4m x 3m. It would be secured with screws and ropes, and would cover part of the path that would be created through the planted area. The project would include sculptures.

Access

The path would be 2m wide, enough for a wheelchair, and would rise up to a maximum height of 1m. However, the gradient proposed would enable wheelchair users to travel along the path safely, and at the top of the ramp there would be flat area to enable wheelchair users to rest. The landscape would be multi-sensory (touch, taste, listen) for the inclusion of visually impaired and deaf people.

Following the removal of the Chinese landscape, the plants would be transplanted in one of the local public open spaces, possibly Tavistock Square. The period for the display has been extended to December 2008, as the plants would then be dormant and this would maximise their chance of survival when transplanted (this was suggested by Kew). The lawn would be re-instated; if approved a condition is recommended that requires details of the lawn re-instatement to be submitted for the Council's approval; as was a requirement of the approval of the Africa Garden.

The small trellis proposed would be installed to the west of the landscaped area and would not restrict views of the planting from the entrance.

The proposed works are relatively modest and, given that they would only be in place for a temporary period of approximately five months, it is considered that they would not have a significantly detrimental impact on the setting of the listed building or on the character and appearance of the

conservation area. There would be no detrimental impact on the amenities of adjoining occupiers.

The trellis and landscaping are proposed for a temporary period to coincide with events related to the Beijing Olympic Games. The landscaping is mostly at a low level and will have a limited impact on the setting of the listed building and the character and appearance of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area. The trellis will be visible against the lower portion of the building, but its open nature will ensure that it is not a dominant feature in the forecourt, and will not disrupt the building's historic setting.

As the proposal is a temporary feature designed to coincide with an international event, it is considered acceptable for this short time. No historic fabric will be affected.