

Delegated Report		Analysis sheet		Expiry Date:		07/11/2007	
		N/A / attached		Consultation Expiry Date:		22/10/2007	
Officer				Application Number(s)			
Stuart Minty				2007/4555/P 2007/4557/L			
Application Address				Drawing Numbers			
Rockefeller Building 21 University Street London WC1E 6JJ				Refer to draft decision notice			
PO 3/4	Area Team Signature	C&UD	Authorised Officer Signature				
Proposal(s)							
1) 2007/4555/P - Installation of new external access ramp within the front lightwell and alterations to entrance steps and railings. 2) 2007/4557/L - Works associated with the installation of new external access ramp within the front lightwell and alterations to entrance steps and railings.							
Recommendation(s):		1) Refuse Planning Permission 2) Refuse Listed Building Consent					
Application Type:		1) Full Planning Permission 2) Listed Building Consent					
Conditions or Reasons for Refusal:		Refer to Draft Decision Notice					
Informatives:							
Consultations							
Adjoining Occupiers:		No. notified	00	No. of responses	00	No. of objections	00
				No. electronic	00		
Summary of consultation responses:		A site notice was displayed on 01/10/2007, Expiring 22/10/2007. No responses have been received.					
CAAC/Local groups comments:		The Bloomsbury CAAC have commented the <i>'The use of materials for the handrail and balustrade should be sympathetic with the existing to minimise its visual impact'</i> . The Charlotte Street Association have been consulted. No response has been received.					

Site Description

The application site relates to a 6 storey building with basement located on the south side of University Street, close to its junction with Gower Street. The building is a grade II listed, and is located within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area.

Relevant History

None of relevance

Relevant policies

Set out below are the UDP policies that the proposals have primarily been assessed against, together with officers' view as to whether or not each policy listed has been complied with. However it should be noted that recommendations are based on assessment of the proposals against the development plan taken as a whole together with other material considerations.

Camden Replacement Unitary Development Plan 2006

SD1 – Quality of Life; B1 – General Design Principles; B3 – Alterations and extensions; B6 – Listed Buildings; B7 – Conservation areas.

Camden Planning Guidance 2006

Access For All; Conservation Areas; Listed Buildings.

Assessment

Proposals:-

The proposal to provide a disabled access ramp to the front entrance within an existing lightwell. The ramp would have a 1.25 metre wide landing, be 11.75 metres in length, with 1.25m high glazed balustrade enclosures. An existing section of railings and the stone kerb would be removed to allow access to the ramp.

Material Planning Considerations:-

- *Impact on the special architectural interest of the listed buildings and the wider conservation area;*
- *Accessibility*

Impact on the special architectural interest of the listed buildings and the wider conservation area

The proposal to provide a disabled access ramp to the front entrance has been well supported by an access statement, and it is considered that this location is the most desirable approach in access terms, and should be possible to achieve without undue harm to the listed building. A ramp in the position shown, the means of support and the alterations to the steps, landing and railings are considered acceptable. However, the design approach is considered to detract from the overall appearance of the railings and the building, by virtue of the different materials, colour, and appearance.

The design cue has been taken from the ramp constructed to the unlisted Anatomy Building nearby on Gower Street, where a glazed balustrades, stainless steel railings and metal ramp have been inserted (PSX0304197). This approach was negotiated in place of upright railings to avoid a visual clash with the decorative railings in front, which have diagonal elements rather than solely vertical posts, and it was considered that the glazing would be less visible. However, it does introduce a new element that is visible through the railings, and the difference in style, colour and finish of the elements is considered harmful to the special architectural interest of the listed building and the wider conservation area.

A more successful approach is at the Grade II* Cruciform Building on Gower Street, where railings that match the design of those on the street edge have been used, with an added tubular handrail at the appropriate height, and all elements (railings, ramp and structural elements) have been painted the same colour as the existing railings. The ramp blends in well with the existing, and does not attract unwarranted attention, or introduce unnecessary new design elements. It is considered that this approach is more appropriate in the case of this listed building, where the railings make an important contribution to the street scene.

The embedded lighting is also considered an inappropriate element in this part of the listed building and should be restricted to the ramp only, and not extend onto the landing of the steps to the building.

On the basis of the above, the application is considered unacceptable and is accordingly recommended for refusal. There are also a number of minor points, which could be resolved via planning condition. These are as follows:-

- (i) The design and access statement mentions a card reader and video entry phone at the entrance door but these are not shown on the drawings. These should ideally be located on the innermost reveal, both on one ashlar block, not extending over the rusticated channels;
- (ii) Larger scale details of the channel between the edge of the new steps and stone kerb, and treatment methods;
- (iii) The existing horizontal bracing between the railings and the building will be removed as part of the works and the fixings removed – the locations may need new Portland stone to be pieced in to repair the surface and so details of making good should be submitted.

Accessibility

The Council's Access Officer has commented that in order to meet the building regulations, further details of the gradient would need to be provided indicating its suitability. The handrails shown are not of a suitable profile and would be unacceptable. In respect of the new stairs, tactile paving and handrails should be provided, neither of which are indicated in the drawings. In addition the nosings should also be provided to the rise of the steps. Details of such will be added to the decision notice as an informative.

Recommendations

Given all of the aforementioned, the applications are considered unacceptable, and are accordingly recommended for refusal of both planning permission and listed building consent.