

Delegated Report		Analysis sheet	Expiry Date:	26/09/2007
			Consultation Expiry Date:	20/09/2007
Officer			Application Number(s)	
Jenny Fisher			1. 2007/3409/P 2. 2007/3410/L	
Application Address			Drawing Numbers	
74/77 Great Russell Street London WC1B 3DA				
PO 3/4	Area Team Signature	C&UD	Authorised Officer Signature	
Proposal(s)				
1. The erection of new mansard roof addition for office use (Class B1). 2. Works associated with the erection of new mansard roof addition for office use (Class B1).				
Recommendation(s):		1. Refuse planning permission 2. Refuse 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	18	No. of responses	01	No. of objections	01
			No. electronic	01		
Summary of consultation responses:	<p>The objector occupies a flat within 69 Great Russell Street. Objects on the following grounds:</p> <p>Adding an extra floor with additional windows in a mansard roof and a modern lift overrun cube would alter the look of the façade, compromise the aesthetic and historic integrity of this view, and would directly and irreversibly harm the point of the conservation in this conservation area. The mansard windows would mean that living room space would be directly overlooked. Additionally a portion of the view of the sky would be blocked off.</p>					
CAAC/Local groups* comments: <small>*Please Specify</small>	<p><u>English Heritage</u> Flex authorisation 04/09/2007</p> <p><u>Bloomsbury CAAC</u> Strongly object to the proposed roof extension and consider that this would detract from the special interest of this group of fairly unaltered listed houses in a premier location within the conservation area. The extension would be visible from the NW part of Bloomsbury Square and through the open balustrade which is important to the design and character of the buildings and should be seen silhouetted against the sky, not another ? mansard!</p>					

Site Description

The building is located on the corner of Montague Street and Great Russell Street. Four houses dating from c. 1662-4 altered in the mid 19th century form the application site. The premises comprise four storeys with basements. No. 77, on the corner of Great Russell Street and Montague Street, has an existing roof storey, probably 20th century, constructed with a metal frame and clay tile covering and lit by a central roof light. The buildings have been united as a single unit with internal links through all party walls. The buildings are Grade II listed.

There are no visible roof additions or mansards on buildings to the north side of Bloomsbury Square. They appear to have slated double pitched roofs, visible from Bloomsbury Square. Nos. 74-77 Great Russell Street is part of the western block of the formal composition which forms the north side of Bloomsbury Square.

The site is within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area.

Relevant History

2006/4648/P and 2006/4649/L

Planning and listed building applications submitted for the erection of new mansard roof addition for office use (Class B1) including the installation of plant/air conditioning equipment at roof level. The applications were withdrawn following discussions with the Council where concern was raised regarding the height of the mansard roof, considered detrimental to the composition of the terrace.

2007/1022/P and 2007/1033/L 20/04/2007 planning and listed building applications refused for: Erection of new mansard roof addition for office use (Class B1).

Reason:

2007/1022/P The proposed dormer windows, lift over run, plant, plant enclosure and stair enclosure, by virtue of the size, bulk, massing and inappropriate design would be visually intrusive to the host building and when viewed from surrounding streets and would be harmful to the character and appearance of the host building and would fail to either preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area. This would be contrary to policies B1 (General design principles), B3 (Alterations and extensions), B7 'Conservation areas' of the adopted Replacement Unitary Development Plan 2006 and guidance relating to 'Conservation areas', 'Design' and 'Roof and terraces' of the approved Camden Planning Guidance 2006.

2007/1033/L The proposed dormer windows, lift over run, plant, plant enclosure and stair enclosure, by virtue of the size, bulk, massing and inappropriate design would be harmful to the character and appearance of the listed building and would fail to either preserve or enhance the architectural or historic interest of the building and would be contrary to policy B6 (Listed buildings) of the adopted Replacement Unitary Development Plan 2006.

An appeal was lodged following above refusal. No decision to date.

Applications invalid cheque bounced:

2007/2714/P 2007/1362/L had the applications been valid planning permission and listed building consent would have been granted for:

1. Installation of 4.no air conditioning units at roof level to existing office building (Class B1)
2. Works associated with the installation of 4.no air conditioning units at roof level to existing office building (Class B1).

The position of the air condensers is considered acceptable. Although moved towards the front of the roof, they would not be visible from the ground. They would also not be visible from the rear, including long views from the communal open space to the rear of Montague Street and Bedford Place. The application complies with B3 (alterations that harm the architectural quality of a building); B6 (listed buildings) and B7 (conservation areas).

Relevant policies

Adopted Replacement Unitary Development Plan 2006

SD3 Mixed use development; SD7B Noise and vibration; SD8 Disturbance from plant and machinery; SD6 Amenity for occupiers and neighbours; E1 Location of business uses; B1 General design principles; B3 Alterations and extensions; B6 Listed buildings; B7 Conservation areas; Appendix 1 Noise and vibration thresholds.

Camden Planning Guidance Adopted 2006

Conservation areas; Design; Listed buildings; Noise and vibration; Overlooking and privacy; Plant, machinery and ducting – design and siting; Roofs and terraces.

Bloomsbury Conservation Area Statement

Assessment

Proposed

The erection of new mansard roof addition for office use (Class B1).

The west section of the existing building includes a roof extension at fourth floor level. This would be removed and replaced with a new single storey lightweight steel frame extension erected over the whole roof area. The additional storey to the properties would include a double-pitched mansard with dormer windows behind the existing parapet. A lift overrun would be erected towards the rear of the new roof and 5 air condensers would be installed on the roof.

The main issues to consider are:

- principle of roof extension;
- impact of the proposal on the character and appearance of the building and the conservation area;
- creation of additional B1 floor space;
- amenity to adjoining occupiers.

Principle of roof extension

The current flat roof arrangement on the building is not significant in terms of historic fabric and the principle of a more traditional roof form is acceptable.

Previous application (refused)

The dormer windows were considered visually intrusive above and through the balustrade, introducing a disruptive element into the roofline of buildings facing the north side of Bloomsbury Square.

That no dormer windows would be acceptable in any elevation of the proposed new roof storey is due to the fact that the established roof patterns in this area do not include dormer windows. The part mansard roof at no. 29 Montague Street is not visible from the front of the building. There is no record on the planning system of planning permission or listed building consent being granted for this work and it is likely that it was erected quite some time ago, possibly before the buildings were listed. Even so it does not constitute an *“established form of roof addition or alteration to a terrace or group of similar buildings and where continuing the pattern of development would help to re-unite a group of buildings or townscape”* as stated in the Camden Supplementary Planning Guidance.

Annexe C of PPG 15 says:

“C34 Any decision as to whether new dormers or roof lights can be added to a roof must be approached carefully. Historic roof structures must not be damaged by their insertion. New dormers should not upset a symmetrical design of either an individual building or a terrace. Regions have differing traditional types of dormer and these traditions should be respected.

C.35 Where new dormers would be inappropriate to the type of building or proposed position, new roof lights, preferably in flush fittings, may be acceptable, but not on prominent roof slopes.

The English Heritage document “London terrace houses 1660-1860” says:

Roof Extensions

“...but where it is evident that additional floors in any form will harm the architectural integrity of a building, a roofscape or the interest of a group, they should not be accepted.”

It is considered that the proposed application has failed to satisfactorily address the Council's concerns highlighted in the last submission. It is recommended that the application be refused.

Plant, proposed plant enclosure, and lift overrun

This application has failed to address the concerns regarding the visual impact of the plant, proposed plant enclosure, and lift overrun.

Dormer windows

Following the previous refusal the applicants have tried to solve the issue of the visually intrusive dormers by omitting any protruding dormer elements and setting the windows within the profile of the primary pitch. The reflective nature of the mansard glazing is still likely to be visible through the balustrade which should be viewed against the skyline or neutral background. As such the Council maintain the concerns expressed in the last application and await the inspector's decision.

Whilst the height of the proposed ridge of the new mansard roof storey is higher than the adjacent ridge line on no. 73 Great Russell Street, the impact on the formal composition of the north side of the square in terms of the height of the roofs is not considered to be of sufficient harm to justify refusal in principle. However there does appear to be sufficient room to reduce the floor to ceiling heights and the floor structure has been increased by approximately 400mm even though the structural engineers report indicates the existing construction can accommodate the increase in additional load. The application has failed to reduce the height of the mansard to match the adjacent building following the Council's previous comments.

It is possible to provide additional habitable space within a new mansard without compromising the special character of the building through installing lights to the roof of the mansard. The applicants are advised to seek further options if they cannot wait for the inspector's decision regarding the dormer windows.

It is considered that the height of the lift over ride will result in a harmful effect on the view of the buildings from Montague Street. The large box like structure is an inappropriate addition to a traditional roof form.

Creation of additional B1 floor space

With the removal of the existing roof extension at No. 74 (179 m²), the proposal would result in the net gain of 196 m² of office floor space. Policy SD3 of the adopted UDP advises that a contribution to the supply of housing would be required where a proposal would increase the total gross floor space by more than 200 m². Given the proposal would not exceed this threshold, a mixed-use scheme, including the provision of additional housing, would not be required.

The scheme complies with E1 that states the council will grant planning permission for office development in locations accessible by a choice of a means of transport other than car. This centrally located building is highly accessible to public transport.

Amenity

No objections from Environmental Health – pollution. Officer has reviewed the applicant's acoustic report, and raises no objection. If approved requests standard conditions.

Views from the objector's flat across rooftops would be affected, however this is non-material in planning terms. No. 69 faces Montague Street; as a consequence there would be no direct views into the objector's flat. The nearest window would be set in 3.5m. from the corner of the building (Montague Street/Great Russell Street) any views out towards the objector's premises would be at an oblique angle some distance away. It is also considered that views into adjoining properties would be unlikely.

The proposal would comply with SD6; it would not have adverse impact on adjoining residents by reason of loss of light, outlook or privacy.