

Delegated Report		Analysis sheet		Expiry Date:	17/07/2007
Members' Briefing		N/A / attached		Consultation Expiry Date:	05/07/2007
Officer			Application Number(s)		
Elaine Quigley			(i) 2007/2595/P (ii) 2007/2600/L		
Application Address			Drawing Numbers		
41 Bedford Square (including rear mews building at 11 Bedford Avenue) London WC1B 3DP					
PO 3/4	Area Team Signature	C&UD	Authorised Officer Signature		
Proposal(s)					
<p>(i) External alterations to the existing office (Class B1 Use) building comprising the installation of 4 condenser units with louvered acoustic screens within the undercroft/pavement vaults, the installation of a window module at rear mews building to lower ground window within the central courtyard, and replacement with acoustic louvered screens to conceal condenser and new glazed screen within courtyard area.</p> <p>(ii) Works associated with alterations to the office building (Class B1 Use) including internal partitions within the third and lower ground floors, the installation of 4 condenser units with louvered acoustic screens within the undercroft, the replacement of internal heating, electrical and data services and the installation of a window module at rear mews building to lower ground window within the central courtyard, and replacement with acoustic louvered screens to conceal condenser and new glazed screen within courtyard area.</p>					
Recommendation(s):		<p>(i) To grant planning permission subject to conditions</p> <p>(ii) To grant listed building consent subject to conditions</p>			
Application Type:		<p>Full Planning Permission</p> <p>Listed Building Consent</p>			

Conditions or Reasons for Refusal:	Refer to Draft Decision Notice					
Informatives:						
Consultations						
Adjoining Occupiers:	No. notified	02	No. of responses	01	No. of objections	01
			No. electronic	00		
Summary of consultation responses:	<p>Site notice No letters received as the result of the display of a site notice (expired 05/07/2007)</p> <p>Third Party Representation No letters received (expired 03/07/2007)</p>					
CAAC/Local groups* comments: <small>*Please Specify</small>	<p>Bloomsbury Association – objects The following objections have been raised:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Due to recent sale of all buildings on south side of Bedford Square there is a risk that programme of refurbishment of the frontages to the frontages of Bedford Avenue will not be completed. This should be raised with the applicant and achieved through a S106 agreement. 2. The location of the new air conditionings units in the basement is considered inappropriate for a Grade I Listed Building 3. Welcome reinstatement of doorway to 11 Bedford Avenue and introduction of CCTV surveillance due to ongoing drug problems within the Square. 4. Information contained in the noise report is inaccurate as it states that there are no residential units within the immediate vicinity. Residential uses located on south side of Bedford Square, no. 42 Bedford Square may become residential (subject to planning permission), and flats in Adeline Place. 5. Video entrance system panels and door furniture should be finished in brass rather than stainless steel. 6. Concerned that unregulated construction works appears to be currently on-going. <p>See assessment section of report for comments relating to these objections.</p> <p>Bloomsbury CAAC – objects</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The replacement of windows and timber doors onto the rear and front areas with A/C louvres is unacceptable as these will be visible from within the building. 2. The entry-phone should be recessed flush not surface mounted <p>See assessment section of report for comments relating to these objections.</p> <p>English Heritage – no objections Flexible authorisation to determine the applications</p>					

Site Description

The application site is the last building on the south western corner of Bedford Square close to the junction with Adeline Place and extends to include the Mews building at no. 11 Bedford Avenue. No. 41 Bedford Square forms part of a symmetrical terrace of 15 houses, which date from 1775. The building comprises ground plus two upper floors, mansard and basement with a full height canted bay rear elevation. Internally the building retains most of its historic features of interest, including fine plaster first floor ceilings along with historic floor plan. The building contains a single storey link to the mews. No. 11 Bedford Avenue appears to have been rebuilt in the late 20th and contains little fabric of historic merit. Both buildings are currently in office use (B1 use class).

The terrace is grade I listed and considered to make a significant contribution to the character and appearance of Bloomsbury Conservation Area of which it forms a part.

Relevant History

2006/5393/P and 2006/5394/L

Planning permission and listed building consent applications were submitted for works to Grade I Listed building including reinstatement of entrance at basement level within front light well, installation of air conditioning plant within front lightwell and within acoustic enclosure on flat roof at rear courtyard, installation of CCTV units, general works of repair, and creation of new flat roof between no.41 and mews building at no.11, in connection with internal refurbishment of office buildings (Class B1). As a result of discussions with the Council the applicants withdrew the applications. The proposal was considered harmful to the character and appearance of the listed building.

Relevant policies

Adopted Replacement Unitary Development Plan 2006

SD6 'Amenity for occupiers and neighbours', SD7B 'Noise and vibration pollution', SD8 'Disturbance from plant and machinery', B1 'General design principles', B3 'Alterations and extensions', B6 'Listed buildings', B7 'Conservation areas', Appendix 1 'Noise and vibration thresholds'.

Camden Planning Guidance (Adopted December 2006)

'Conservation areas', 'Daylight and sunlight', 'Design', 'Extensions, alterations and conservatories', 'Listed buildings', 'Noise and vibration', 'Overlooking and privacy', 'Plant, machinery and ducting – design and siting'.

Assessment

Planning permission and listed building consent are sought for external alterations to the existing office (Class B1 Use) building comprising the installation of 4 condenser units with louvered acoustic screens within the undercroft/pavement vaults, the installation of a window module at rear mews building to lower ground window within the central courtyard, and replacement with acoustic louvered screens to conceal condenser and new glazed screen within courtyard area. This scheme has been amended from the previously withdrawn applications to include the following changes:

- Omission of external CCTV cameras
- Removal of existing ground floor window on the front elevation of the single storey extension at no. 11 Bedford Avenue facing into the courtyard area, opening made larger and replacement with aluminium louver door to be finished in white in association with the internally located condenser unit
- Enclosure of the ground floor covered walkway that links both buildings by installation of new glazed screen set into a stainless steel head and base channel
- Installation of three air conditioning units within the front basement vaults (one in each vault) and installation of 3 no. acoustic louvers doors (one to each of the basement vaults)
- Second floor partition to be retained
- Relocation of the new service riser to within the existing modern rear addition
- Installing more traditional ironmongery
- Re-slating the roof with Heather Blue Penrhyn Welsh slate

The main issues to be considered are:

- The impact on the character and appearance of the listed building
- The impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area
- Amenity – overshadowing and noise

Listed building issues

Impact on the character and appearance of the listed building

Internal services

The scheme has been amended to install the new service riser within the existing modern rear addition. This would not be harmful to the character and fabric of the grade I listed building and would be considered acceptable.

Any new internal units should be located away from original joinery (the proposal would conceal the original spandrel panels and block the full height window reveal as originally intended) however the new units would replace old units in the same location and match the joinery behind. This would not worsen the existing situation or result in the loss of original fabric.

The location and installation of the remainder of the internal air conditioning units and service pipework is acceptable as it is proposed to reuse existing pipe runs and voids. This would not result in any loss of original fabric and would be considered acceptable.

Glazed enclosure

The enclosure of the ground floor covered walkway that links the buildings would be considered lightweight in terms of its design and materials and would be considered acceptable.

Minor structural repairs

The proposal includes minor structural repairs including replacing a rotten roof beam and repairing cracking to external brick facades. Detailed analyses of the problem and practical conservation based solutions have been proposed by qualified engineers. The structural works are therefore considered acceptable.

The Bloomsbury Association has raised concern that unregulated construction works appears to be currently on-going. Specific details have not been provided. The matter has been passed to the Council's Enforcement Team who are currently investigating the alleged unauthorised works.

Internal refurbishment and redecoration

It is proposed to refurbish the building using more traditional internal ironmongery and paint the joinery in more traditional colours. The works adequately address the Council's concerns relating to the previously withdrawn schemes and is

considered acceptable.

Layout

The second floor partition within the front room is considered to be historic and would be retained. This is welcomed as it retains the historic fabric and the historic plan form of the building at this level. This would be considered acceptable.

Roof

Like for like repairs to the roof do not require consent from the Council. It is proposed to replace the existing slates with Heather Blue Penrhyn Welsh slate that is considered acceptable as it is in keeping with the texture, colour and geological age of the original roof slate.

Entry-phone

The entry phone system is considered acceptable in terms of its design and materials and would not be considered to harm the character or appearance of the listed building.

Planning issues

Impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area

Air conditioning units

It is proposed to locate the new air conditioning units within the undercrofts under the pavement of Bedford Square. The non-original timber doors are to be replaced with powder-coated aluminium louvred doors. The air conditioning units would not be visible from the street and would be considered acceptable in terms of its impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area.

It is also proposed to remove the existing ground floor window on the front elevation of the single storey extension at no. 11 Bedford Avenue facing into the courtyard area. The opening would be made larger and replaced with aluminium louver door to be finished in white in association with the internally located condenser unit. Given the restricted visibility of this part of the courtyard area from the public domain the proposed new door would not be considered harmful to the character and appearance of the conservation area. It must be noted that no. 11 Bedford Avenue appears to have been rebuilt in the late 20th and contains little fabric of historic merit.

Amenity

Daylight/sunlight

The proposed air conditioning units would be located within the front basement vaults. The location of the proposed air conditioning units would not have an adverse impact on the amenity of the adjoining occupiers in terms of loss of light or overshadowing.

Noise

The closest residential properties are located at 122 to 142 Bedford Court Mansions, Adeline Place which lies approximately 26m to the west of the application site and flats at 101 to 121 Bedford Court Mansions, Bedford Avenue which lies approximately 27m to the south of the application site. Although the acoustic report states that there are no obvious residential properties within the immediate vicinity of the application site, acoustic surveys were carried out at two locations in order to calculate the background noise levels – the ground floor terrace area to the rear and the first floor front elevation overlooking Bedford Square. The acoustic report demonstrates that the air conditioning units would meet the Council's minimum noise standards requirements. A condition would be attached to the application to ensure that this is the case.

Conclusion

The proposal is considered acceptable in terms of its impact on the character and appearance of the listed building, the conservation area and the amenity of the neighbouring occupiers and would be recommended for approval subject to conditions.