

Address:	18-20 Laystall Street London EC1R 4PG	
Application Number:	2006/1813/P	Officer: Jenny Fisher
Ward:	Holborn & Covent Garden	
Date Received:	13/04/2006	
Proposal: Erection of a mansard roof with terrace to the existing four storey plus basement building, external alterations to the front and rear elevations and change of use from office use (Class B1) to residential use (Class C3) to accommodate 7 self-contained flats (6 one-bed units and 1 three-bed unit) and 2 live/work units (sui generis). Drawing Numbers: Site location plan; 1615/01; 02; 03; 04; 06A; 07; 08; 09A; 10A.		
RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY: Grant planning permission with conditions		
Applicant: Matrix (Laystall Street) Ltd 37 Ivor Place London NW1 6EA	Agent: DVM Architects 4A Murray Street London NW1 9RE	

ANALYSIS INFORMATION

Land Use Details:			
	Use Class	Use Description	Floor space
Existing	B1 Business		508m ²
Proposed	C3 Dwelling House SG Live/work units Total		462m ² 128m ² 590m ² (+88m ² +17%)

Residential Use Details:										
	Residential Type	No. of Habitable Rooms per Unit								
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9+
Existing	Flat/Maisonette									
Proposed	Flat/Maisonette		8		1					

OFFICERS' REPORT

Reason for Referral to Committee: The application involves the creation of more than five residential units [clause 3(iii)], and the conclusion of a S106 planning obligation relating to matters beyond those delegated [clause 3(vi)].

This item was deferred from the Committee meeting of 14th September 2006 for officers to investigate the potential for incorporation of a green roof (see para 6.4), and to calculate what level of public open space contribution we would seek if it were considered necessary (see para 6.5).

1. SITE

- 1.1 The building forms part of a terrace on the north side of Laystall Street. It is four storeys tall with a basement, with a blank fascia board above ground floor level. At ground floor level there are three bays separated by columns. The left hand bay contains two steps up to slightly recessed glass doors. The other two ground floor bays are tiled with high level horizontal metal casement windows.
- 1.2 Above ground floor level there are three storeys with three bays of casement windows set in a red brick frontage. The building is topped by a projecting cornice and parapet railing at roof level. The interior of the building is unremarkable.
- 1.3 The building contributes to the uniformity of the street scene characterised by the building line, the inclusion of a fascia above ground floor level, the expression of horizontal lines along the elevation, the storey heights, and the facing materials along the north side of Laystall Street. It is located within the Hatton Garden Conservation Area.

2. THE PROPOSAL

- 2.1 The current application would provide the same mix of residential and live/work units as a previously approved scheme (ref: 2005/3890/P), but the previous scheme included the demolition of the existing building whereas the current scheme includes the retention, alteration, extension and conversion of the existing building.
- 2.2 An additional floor is proposed in the form of a traditional slate covered mansard with lead clad dormers. The uses proposed are two live/work units with each unit having one bedroom and living-rooms with kitchens at ground floor level and bathrooms and workspace located in the basement, six 1-bedroom flats on the first to third floor levels and a three-bedroom flat on the new fourth (mansard) floor level.
- 2.3 Pavement lights would be installed in front of the building to allow light into a bathroom and communal refuse store. A communal entrance door would be installed in the centre of the ground floor front elevation with replacement windows either side, and a new lift would be installed. The basement floor would be

extended by 4m to the rear and the ground floor would be reduced by 1m to match the building line above. A small rear yard area would be created at basement level, and windows would be installed to the rear basement and ground floor levels to match the windows above.

3. RELEVANT HISTORY

- 3.1 An application (ref: 2005/1776/P) for the demolition of the existing office building and change of use and works of conversion from office use (Class B1) to residential Use (Class C3) to create a 7-storey building to accommodate 11 self-contained flats was withdrawn in September 2005.
- 3.2 The demolition of the existing office building and erection of new 5 storey plus basement residential building to accommodate 7 self-contained flats (6 one-bed units and 1 three-bed unit) and 2 live/work units with workspace at basement level was granted planning permission (ref: 2005/3890/P) on 2nd March 2006. An associated S106 agreement requires car-free housing, an educational contribution of £8,362, a contribution to highway improvements of £3,275.40, and a requirement that the live/work units be laid out and occupied as per the approved drawings.

4. CONSULTATIONS

4.1 Adjoining Occupiers

	Original
Number of Letters Sent	31
Number of responses Received	03
Number in Support	00
Number of Objections	02

- 4.2 Objections have been lodged by occupants of Cavendish Mansions flats opposite the site. One objector is concerned about overlooking, and second objector who lives in a basement flat is concerned about loss of light. The third letter affirms that there is no objection to the proposal but raises issues relating to their own application for a roof terrace fence. This has no relation to the current application and will be addressed separately from this assessment.

5. POLICIES

- 5.1 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 Unitary Development Plan 2000

- | | | | |
|-----|-----|------------------------|----------|
| 5.2 | SD2 | planning obligations | complies |
| | SD6 | amenity for neighbours | complies |
| | SD9 | resources and energy | complies |
| | H1 | new housing | complies |

H7	lifetime homes	complies
H8	mix of units	complies
B1	general design principles	complies
B3	alterations and extensions	complies
B4	shop fronts	complies
B7	conservation areas	complies
N4	providing public open space	complies
N5	biodiversity	complies
E2	retention of business uses	complies
E4	live/work units	complies
T3	pedestrians and cycle parking	complies
T8	car-free housing	complies

Other Relevant Planning Policies

- 5.3 Hatton Garden C.A.Statement

Supplementary Planning Guidance

- 5.4 Various guidance relevant to residential development

6. ASSESSMENT

- 6.1 The principal considerations material to the determination of this application are summarised as follows:

Loss of office use
Urban design/townscape issues;
Quality and mix of residential unit sizes;
Residential amenity;
Car and cycle parking
Sustainability and lifetime homes
Biodiversity

Loss of office use

- 6.2 The loss of the existing office use must be considered against Policy E2, which seeks to retain sites and buildings in employment (B Class) use subject to an assessment of the potential for the continuation of the business use. The Policy allows for a change of use of premises suitable only for office use to residential use. Previously for application No. 2005/3890/P the applicant submitted supporting information to demonstrate that the building is not technically suitable for light industrial use and that reasonable attempts had been made to market the building for office purposes without success. Consequently, the loss of the existing use was considered acceptable in policy terms and the proposed residential use supported, being a priority use in the UDP. The current application is also considered acceptable for the same reasons.

Urban Design/Townscape

- 6.3 The principal of an additional roof storey and new ground floor elevational design were agreed by the Council as part of the previous approval. The design of the ground floor front elevation of the current scheme is very similar to the approved scheme. Instead of a window divided vertically by a single glazing bar with a door to one side, and a tripartite window forming the remainder of the ground floor

elevation, the door would be in a central location with windows on both sides of the door. The design of the roof extension would match the approved scheme.

- 6.4 Pavement lights were not included in the previous scheme. They are not an unusual street scene feature for the Central London area and are considered acceptable in this location. A condition requesting details of pavement lights and facing materials is recommended.

Green roof issue

The proposed roof extension has been designed in mansard form to fit in with the established character of this part of the Hatton Garden Conservation Area, which is typified by Victorian commercial and residential buildings of traditional appearance. A green roof would have a bulkier and deeper form of construction, would require a roof-top enclosure to facilitate access and safety railings, which would have a much greater impact on the character and appearance of the area and introduce visual clutter at roof level. In this instance it is therefore considered that a green roof would be inappropriate for heritage reasons. In relation to sustainability matters it should be noted that the proposal is for the retention and conversion of the existing building, which would bring significant sustainability benefits in comparison to the scheme approved in March 2006 for the demolition of the existing building and construction of a new building.

Quality and mix of residential unit sizes

- 6.5 The application proposes a residential mix of one bedroom flats with a larger three bedroom unit on the mansard floor. Recent housing need surveys have identified a need for smaller units as well as for larger, family sized, units. Each flat would meet the internal space standards set out in the SPG. None of the units would have external amenity space, with the exception of a front roof terrace for the three bedroom family unit and a small rear basement area for the live/work units. Having regard to the inner city location, it is considered that the mix of unit sizes is appropriate and that external amenity space provision is acceptable given the practicalities of this constrained site. Although the change of use would result in the creation of more than 5 residential units it is considered that it is unreasonable to require a financial contribution towards public open space owing to the previously approved redevelopment scheme which did not include any such provision.

Public open space contribution issue

The previous redevelopment scheme was approved in March 2006 before policy N4 (providing public open space) was adopted, and so a financial contribution towards public open space was not required. In this instance it is considered that the existence of the extant planning permission means that it would not be reasonable for the Council to refuse planning permission because of a failure to make any contribution towards public open space. Before accepting this argument Members have asked for information on what level of contribution would normally be required for the proposed development. According to current planning guidance the scheme would require a contribution of £5,445, which is caluated as follows: the scheme includes 11 bedrooms (8 x 1 bed flats and 1 x 3 bed flat) and it is generally expected that there will be an occupation of 1 person per bedroom, and a

provision of 9m² of open space is required per person, and the average capital cost of providing public open space is £55 per square metre, which results in a contribution of 99 x £55 = £5,445.

- 6.6 The provision of live-work units on the ground and basement floors is supported as both a contribution to sustainable development and provision of a small amount of employment floor space. It is also a practical solution to the lack of natural light in the basement area, which would only have windows at the rear and light from the front via pavement lights. A S106 agreement is recommended to require the live/work units to be occupied as shown on the application drawings in order to ensure the work space is provided and retained.

Residential amenity

- 6.7 The two main areas to consider relate to the privacy and daylight implications for the flats in the building on the opposite side of Laystall Street in Cavendish Mansions. In terms of daylight, the building would essentially be the same height and bulk as the existing with the exception of the setback mansard floor, which would have a minimal impact on light. The separation between the front elevations of Cavendish Mansions and the application building is less than the 18m that would normally be expected between windows of different flats, however as these are windows on the front elevation of the building visible from the highway it is reasonable to expect a lesser degree of privacy. It is considered that there would be no material harm to the amenities of the occupants of 22 Laystall Street arising from the proposal. The buildings to the rear of the site, whilst being in close proximity, are all in commercial use and their relationship with the proposed development is considered acceptable in both privacy and daylight terms.

Car and cycle parking

- 6.8 The site is within a CPZ with identified parking stress, in close proximity to a range of services and with good public transport links. As no parking is provided on site the development is appropriate for a 'car-free' planning obligation to which the applicant has agreed. Consequently, the development would not increase traffic or parking congestion and is acceptable in this regard. The live/work units at basement/ground floor level both include storage areas and a rear terrace, which could accommodate a cycle. The main entrance hall would not be large enough for the storage of cycles for the occupants of flats on upper floors. The premises have very good access to public transport and it is considered that in this case it would not be appropriate to reduce the number of live/work units in order to create a basement or ground floor cycle store for each of the flats.

Sustainability and lifetime homes

- 6.9 The use of the existing building rather than demolition and re-build, would be in line with policy SD1 and the Council's intention to achieve sustainable development. The Central London Area is one that experiences the most intense development trends and pressures. Although on a small scale the retention of the existing building and its use for residential purposes, with an element of business use in the basement, would contribute to the diverse needs of future residents and users thus meeting both community and business needs. It would also contribute to the area's regeneration by making full use of the building. Designation of the development as car-free would ensure that the change of use of the building would not exacerbate

poor air quality that results from vehicular traffic. The sustainability of the proposal is in line with policy SD9

- 6.10 The Council encourages new housing development to be accessible to all. For compliance with policy H7 'lifetime homes' standards should be met. Residential units proposed would each be on one level and a new lift would be installed providing access to all levels. There is currently a high step up into the building, this would be reduced in height making entrance into the building easier; however the standard requires a level access, which is required by the recommended condition. Subject to the latter modification, the development would achieve the 'lifetime homes' standard encouraged in all new housing developments.

Biodiversity

- 6.11 In line with policy N5, officers have considered the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity, including the creation of wildlife habitats. The rear basement area and fourth floor terrace proposed are small, and opportunities are limited. It is therefore considered in this case that it would be unreasonable to attach a condition requiring the creation of a wildlife habitat within the scheme proposed. Nevertheless an informative is recommended encouraging the applicant to plant climbers over rear walls and to provide planting for the rear basement and fourth floor terraces.

Other Matters

- 6.12 The development would require a financial contribution of £8.362 for local education provision, which would be incorporated as a clause in the S106. A contribution is required for the three bedroom unit only. Works of demolition and construction associated with the previous application (reg. No. 2005/3890) would have necessitated works within the highway, therefore a contribution to remedial highway works was required and was included in the legal agreement. The current scheme would not require works that would affect the highway, therefore a highway contribution has not been sought.

7. CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The loss of the existing office use is acceptable in terms of policy having regard to the exception relating to changes from office to residential and the supporting information in respect of the inappropriateness of the building for light industrial use and the marketing difficulties experienced in finding an office occupier, together with the provision of some employment space in the live/work units. The existing building provides a neutral contribution to the Hatton Garden Conservation Area and the proposed alterations would make a small but positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area. The mix of unit sizes is appropriate for the context and their relationship with other residential properties is acceptable and would not materially worsen existing residential amenity. The 'car-free' S106 included in the recommendation would ensure that the development does not increase parking congestion in the locality and financial contributions are included to address education infrastructure.

8. LEGAL COMMENTS

- 8.1 Members are referred to the note from the Legal Division at the start of the Agenda.

9. RECOMMENDATION

9.1 That planning permission be granted subject to conditions and the satisfactory conclusion of a section 106 Planning Obligation covering the following heads of terms:

- Car free;
- An education contribution of £9278;
- A requirement that the live/work units be laid out and maintained as shown on drawings hereby approved.