

Delegated Report (Members Briefing)		Analysis sheet		Expiry Date:	16/03/2007
		N/A / attached		Consultation Expiry Date:	20/02/2007
Officer			Application Number(s)		
Tom Webster			2006/5114/P		
Application Address			Drawing Numbers		
17 Conway Street London W1T 6BR			See draft decision notice.		
PO 3/4	Area Team Signature	C&UD	Authorised Officer Signature		
Proposal(s)					
Replacement of 7 air-conditioning units in front basement lightwell with 7 new air-conditioning units located within 2 louvred acoustic boxes, replacement of 7 air-conditioning units on roof at rear second floor level with 13 new air-conditioning units located within 4 louvred acoustic boxes, and replacement of 5 air-conditioning units on roof at third floor level with 2 new air-conditioning units located within 2 louvred acoustic boxes.					
Recommendation(s):		Approve			
Application Type:		Full Planning Permission			

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:	Site notice posted on the 30/1/2007. It expired on the 20/02/2007					
CAAC/Local groups* comments: *Please Specify	<p>The following objections were received:</p> <p>GK Organization Ltd: <i>The acoustic report states that the second floor air con units could run as high as 71decibels, where the required noise criteria are 39.5 decibels.</i></p> <p><i>There is no noise report on the noise from the two air con units.</i></p> <p>Charlotte Street Association <i>The application should be rejected on the grounds of sustainability. Planning approval for the change of use was not granted to include air condition units. Noise levels quoted 60dls in a residential area are unacceptable.</i></p> <p>Bloomsbury CAAC No comment</p>					

Site Description

The application site relates to a 1950's office building comprising of basement, and four upper floors, the top floor being a later mansard roof extension. The building is located on the west side of Conway Street close to its junction with Fitzroy Square and the Fitzroy Square Gardens. To the rear the site adjoins 3-10 Warren Mews, which is a two-storey building, used for light industrial purposes and beyond that the residential properties on the west side of Warren Mews.

The site is located within the Bloomsbury conservation area, the Fitzrovia area and is also within the Central London Area. Although the building itself is not listed, all of the remaining properties within the terrace on the west side of Conway Street are either grade II or II* listed, whilst all but No 12 Conway Street on the east side of the street are of the same designation.

Relevant History

2006/3420/P - Change of use from office use (Class B1) to dual use as either educational use (Class D1) or office use (Class B1) – Granted -24/10/2006

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.

Adopted Replacement UDP (July 2006)

S1 'Strategic policies',
SD6 'Amenity for occupiers and neighbours',
B1 'General design principles',
B3 'Alterations and extensions'.
B7 'Conservation Areas'

Camden Planning Guidance 2006
Conservation Areas

Assessment

Planning permission is sought for the installation of seven air condition units at basement level, 13 at the rear of the second floor, and two at third floor level (one at the front, and the other at the rear). These will replace the existing 7, 7 and 5 air con units respectively. The 13 at second floor level will be housed inside 4 acoustic boxes.

The main issues are:

1) Impact on the character and appearance of the original building and the surrounding area.

2) Noise implications

- 1) Given the narrow proportions of the lightwell, the seven air condition (the original plans for this application showed 10) units at basement level will not be visible from the streetscene, and so cannot be considered to have a detrimental impact to the wider conservation area, or the building itself.

Turning to the second floor aspect of the proposal, although the applicants seek to replace 7 air condition units with a greater number (13), it is considered that due to the substantial screening they will receive they will not be a dominant feature; revised and additional elevational drawings show that the air con units will be well screened inside 4 louvred acoustic boxes. At 2.7m high, the height of the boxes is not considered to be excessive, and visually, the existing scene behind the application building is that of a cluttered appearance.

As far as the two air con units at first floor level are concerned, both are modest in scale (1m in height), and are flush with the walls (not in front of any windows). A site visit showed that the air con unit to the front will not be visible from the streetscene, and so will respect the character and appearance of the conservation area. Moreover, it is replacing 4 units that were far larger in size and scale. This, therefore, represents an improvement, although it should be noted that there are no planning records for the previous air con units.

- 2) This application is accompanied by a 'Noise Impact Assessment' which showed that the noise levels for the air con units alone were higher than what is considered reasonable by the council, however following discussions with the applicant, they have produced additional information detailing the fact that with the screening provided, the attenuation levels will be reduced by 18.5DbA at the second floor level, and 12DbA at basement level, and on the basis of this information the Council is satisfied that the installation of the new air conditioning units will not have a detrimental impact on the amenities of the surrounding neighbours; there are few residential facilities in the immediate vicinity, and at roof level they will not be heard by passing pedestrians. Environmental Health officers have viewed the report and consider that complaints from the use of the new plant will be unlikely. A condition is recommended to ensure compliance with the Councils model noise condition, and that the hours of use are restricted to daytime hours only, in the event of planning permission being granted.

Conclusion

The proposal is considered acceptable in terms of the impact on the character and appearance of the building, the surrounding area, and the amenity of the adjoining residents and is recommended for approval.

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