

Delegated Report		Analysis sheet		Expiry Date:		06/12/2006	
				Consultation Expiry Date:		14/11/2006	
Officer				Application Number(s)			
Jenny Fisher				2006/4395/P			
Application Address				Drawing Numbers			
40 Great Russell Street London WC1B 3PH							
PO 3/4	Area Team Signature	C&UD	Authorised Officer Signature		Date:		
Proposal(s)							
<p>The continued use of the basement for office (class B1) purposes.</p>							
Recommendation(s):		Grant planning permission with conditions					
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
Summary of consultation responses:		A site notice was displayed					
CAAC/Local groups* comments: <small>*Please Specify</small>		<u>Bloomsbury CAAC</u> No comment					

Site Description

A four-storey plus basement terrace building within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area. The ground floor is currently in use as a bureau de change, first and second floors have recently been granted planning permission for a change of use from B1 to residential, but it is not clear whether or not this has been implemented. The third floor is in residential use. The basement is currently vacant, described by the applicant as formerly office/workshop. The surrounding area is characterised by a mix of uses including residential, office and retail. The building is part of the Museum Street Area Protected Retail Frontage. The building is not listed.

Relevant History

04/03/2003 (Reg. No. PSX0205359) an application for alterations to shop front refused for the following reason:

The proposed alterations to the shop front would adversely affect the architectural and historic integrity of the existing shop front and would have a detrimental affect on the setting of nearby listed buildings and the special character of the conservation area, contrary to policies EN21 (alterations to existing buildings), EN31 (character + appearance of conservation areas) EN34 (shop fronts in conservation areas) and EN38 (preservation of listed buildings) of the Camden Unitary Development Plan 2000.

15/09/2005 (reg. No.2005/2201) planning permission was granted for:

Change of use from showroom/office (Class B1) to 2 x 1-bed residential flats (Class C3) at first and second floor level and the erection of a four storey plus basement rear extension including rear roof terrace at first floor level.

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.

Replacement UDP policies: S1; R7; E2

Supplementary Planning Guidance for C. London – Map 12 Museum Street Protected Retail Frontages

Assessment

The application has been considered for compliance with Replacement UDP policy E2. The Council will not grant planning permission for development that involves the loss of a business use on a site where there is potential for that use to continue.

The application is for confirmation of an existing use. It may be that the past use as a workshop would have been light industrial, but in any event, offices and light industry are in the same use class. No works are proposed that would render the space more or less suitable for light industry in the future, so no issues arise under policy E2.

The principal policy issue in the Museum Street area relates to retention of specialist retail uses. However, the applicant indicates that the basement is not connected with the ground floor use, and has not been in the past. Camden Retail Surveys indicate that the ground floor has been in use as a bureau de change since at least 2004.

There is only one entrance into the property at ground floor level. Two doors off to the right of an internal passage lead into the ground floor retail area. Further into the building a door across the passage secures access to stairs leading to upper floors and another door off to the right leads to the basement. Plans submitted with this and the previous application (2005/2201) show a door leading from the retail unit to provide access to stairs leading to the basement.

Policy R7C considers the impact of a change of use from retail within areas within Central London and outside designated centres. Although a change of use of the ground floor is not part of the proposal currently under consideration, it has been considered in order to determine whether or not the continued use of the basement for B1 purposes could harm any future use of the ground floor as a retail unit.

The application form submitted with the previous application (2005/2201) declares the use of the ground floor to be retail, as does the application form for the application before that (PSX0205359). It appears that the current A2 use of the ground floor may not be the lawful use of the premises. The ground floor of the building falls within a protected retail frontage within the Museum Street Area; as a consequence the Council is unlikely to agree to the loss of this retail unit.

The basement may have originally provided storage space for previous retail uses at ground floor level, and the loss of storage may compromise a retail use. However in this case, in view of the fact that the basement has been operating as a separate unit, independent of the ground floor use, and the current use of the ground floor unit is as a bureau de change (class A2), it is considered that it would be unreasonable to refuse the application on the grounds that, should a retail use be reinstated, it could be compromised by the lack of basement storage space.

Information will be forwarded to the Council's Enforcement team to investigate the ground floor use.

Approval for the continued use of the basement for B1 purposes is recommended.

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