

Address:	Coram Community Campus 49 Mecklenburgh Square London WC1N 2NY		
Application Number:	2006/2951/P	Officer: Jenny Fisher	
Ward:	Kings Cross	Case File:	
Date Received: 26/06/2006 Proposal: The redevelopment of the site by the erection of a new building comprising semi - basement, ground, first and second floors for the provision of child care facilities (Class D1), ancillary residential (Class C3) and office (Class B1) floor space and associated landscaping. Drawing Numbers: Site Location Plan 143 GA 009; 143 EX 001; 143 EX 002; 143 EX 003; 143 EX 004; 143 EX 005; 143 EX 006; 143 EX 007; 143 GA 010 Rev A; 143 GA 011 Rev A; 143 GA 012 Rev A; 143 GA 013 Rev A; 143 GA 014 Rev A; 143 GA 015 Rev A; 143 GA 020 Rev A; 143 GA 021 Rev A; 143 GA 022 Rev A; 143 GA 023 Rev A; 143 GA 024 Rev A; 143 GA 030 Rev A; 143 GA 031 Rev A; 143 GA 032 Rev A; 143 GA 033 Rev A; 143 SK 201 Rev A; 143 SK 202 Rev A; 143 SK 203 Rev A; Planning And Conservation Area Report; Access Report; Daylight & Sunlight Report; Archaeological Report; Environmental Report; Structural Report; Drawing Schedule; Letter From Whitbybird; Condition Of trees By PG Biddle; Tree Report By Geoffrey Bunyan Associates			
RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY: Grant planning permission with conditions and a S.106 Agreement			
Related Application	26/06/2006		
Date of Application:			
Application Number:	2006/2952/C	Case File:	
Proposal: The demolition of the mortuary, swimming baths and Gregory House. Drawing Numbers: 143 EX 001; 002; 003; 004; 005; 006; 007			
RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY: Grant conservation area consent with conditions			
Applicant: The Coram Family Coram Community Campus 49 Mecklenburgh Square London WC1N 2NY		Agent: Collett & Farmer Architects 13 New North Street London WC1N 3PJ	

ANALYSIS INFORMATION

Land Use Details:			
	Use Class	Use Description	Floor space
Existing	<i>D1 Non-Residential Institution</i>		1180m ²
Proposed	<i>D1 Non-Residential Institution</i>		3714m ²

OFFICERS' REPORT

Reason for Referral to Committee:

The application involves the demolition of buildings within a conservation area (Clause iv) and the redevelopment of the site by the erection of a building to provide more than 1000m² of non-residential floor space (Clause i).

This item was deferred at the Committee meeting of 14th September for Members to undertake a site visit. Additions have been made to the Committee report at paragraphs 3.3, 6.4, 6.9, and 6.17.

1. SITE

- 1.1 The site forms part of the existing Coram Community Campus located between Brunswick Square, Mecklenburgh Square, St Georges Gardens and Coram's Fields. A grade II listed wall forms the northern boundary of the site and the southern boundary of Collingham Gardens and St Georges Gardens, both of which are grade II* listed in the English Heritage Register of Historic Parks and Gardens. The area is situated within the UDP designated Central London Area and forms part of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area.
- 1.2 The Coram Campus is accessed from Mecklenburgh Square to the east and Brunswick Square to the west. William Goodenough House, a residential development providing temporary accommodation for post-graduate students, abuts the site boundary to the east, together with a terrace of 5 grade II listed houses at 43-47 Mecklenburgh Square.
- 1.3 The Coram Family, associated with child care since the establishment of the Foundling Hospital for children in 1739, currently occupy the site comprising a collection of buildings, permanent and temporary, the Coram Museum at 40 Brunswick Square is the only building listed (grade II).
- 1.4 The area under consideration for redevelopment comprises a single storey double height Victorian swimming pool, a disused single storey mortuary, some single storey storage buildings and a two storey late 1950s building (Gregory House). The buildings are all located to the north/east of the site, adjacent to the listed wall that separates the campus from St Georges Gardens. The swimming pool building abuts the mortuary and parts of the north side of the building are against the listed wall to St. Georges Gardens. The mortuary building is a smaller single storey 19th century brick-built structure. Gregory House, built in 1958, is a modern two-storey structure with a flat roof. It includes a staff flat with a large south-facing balcony on the first floor. Windows overlook St George's Gardens (north - facing), the north elevation of the building abuts part of the flank wall of William Goodenough House.

2. THE PROPOSAL

- 2.1 The demolition of buildings referred to in paragraph 1.4.

The development

- 2.2 The current proposal is substantially the same as the scheme that was the subject of an appeal against refusal in 2005. The proposed development has been amended to address the issue of daylight to some of the windows within the flank wall (west) of William Goodenough House, the reason the appeal was dismissed.
- 2.3 The new building, constructed on the site cleared by the demolition of the existing structures, would accommodate the childcare provision currently provided on site, together with a parent's centre with crèches, a child contact centre, child healthcare facilities and a childcare training and arts centre. In addition to housing the various functions of childcare provision outlined above, the new building would allow expansion to meet the future needs of childcare locally and as a national centre of excellence in childcare provision. Gregory House was built to accommodate Old Coram Association members. Therefore if, as proposed, this building is demolished, overnight accommodation for the members will need to be provided in the new building. A resident caretaker is considered essential for security as well as early morning or late night access. The caretaker's flat is also currently within Gregory House so will also be accommodated within the new building. 419m² of residential accommodation ancillary to the main use is proposed.
- 2.4 A sustainable, flexible and durable building is proposed, with a high priority placed on the reduction of maintenance costs. It would be approximately 77m. (length) x 15m. (width) parallel to St. George's Gardens and set back 2.5m. from the boundary. The lowest level would be semi-basement with a height above ground of approximately three and half stories. The overall building height to roof eaves is approximately 0.7m. higher than the ridge of the existing Coram Family Headquarters. The ground floor would be raised by approximately 1.2m. above external ground level, enabling views from this level over the wall into St. George's Gardens, and allowing natural light and ventilation to the semi-basement.
- 2.5 Amendments to the previous scheme are confined to the N/E end of the building adjacent to William Goodenough House. The top floor at the east end would be set back 13m. from the flank wall of the adjacent building and the return wall adjacent to the return wall of William Goodenough House has been set back so that the two align. This is to allow an increased amount of sunlight/daylight to ground floor windows of the neighbouring property.
- 2.6 The internal layout of the training and performance space previously planned for a double height area to the north side of the central corridor, would be moved to the south side. The terrace outside the building now includes a raked area of external seating for use in summer. As previously submitted to allow for future flexibility the plan form provides a series of 'cores', these zones define the vertical design of the structure. Between the core zones a more lightweight construction would facilitate future flexibility. Light wells have been incorporated into the design to allow additional light and ventilation into the building from roof lights with manually operated ventilation louvres. A system of ventilation would be installed to enable cool air entering the building during winter to be warmed immediately on entering the building. Stale warm rises and would be vented at a high level creating an internal circular ventilation pattern.
- 2.7 The roof form evolved from the need to create higher well ventilated spaces at the top of the building, where greater heat gains occur and to avoid narrow perimeter gutters which would be prone to clogging under heavy leaf fall conditions. The 'butterfly' roof would assist both the collection of rainwater for recycling and the cleaning of the wide central gutter zone over the central corridor. Roof mounted plant would be restricted to a small area to the west end; the majority of plant would be installed within the basement.

- 2.8 South façade (facing into the Coram Campus), facing materials would be red cedar for louvres and cladding, with glazed sliding doors at lower ground floor level giving access from crèches onto outdoor play areas. On upper floors windows have been designed to provide high and low level ventilation, solar shading fins would be applied. As proposed previously but with alterations at the east end as described above para. 2.5.
- 2.9 North façade (facing St George's Gardens), facing materials would be solid areas of brick work (hand finished red brick with lime mortar joints) that would align with the piers of the wall to St. George's Gardens. Timber cladding is proposed to second floor level, which is set back 800mm. Metal framed windows are proposed.
- 2.10 Landscaping shown on drawings submitted is confined to the immediate surroundings of the building and includes new tree planting and new open play areas. A full and detailed landscape design would be submitted as required by condition or legal agreement should planning permission be granted for the proposed redevelopment of the site.
- 2.11 Access Pedestrian and vehicular routes would be separated and incorporated into the landscape proposal to be submitted . Access into the building would be via ramp as well as steps and internally by lift to upper floors.
- 2.12 A Bicycle store would be provided for visitors and staff. The Coram Campus has provision for the parking of 21 cars; this would not be altered by the proposal.

3. RELEVANT HISTORY

- 3.1 On the 9th March 2005 the General Purposes (Development Control) Sub-Committee decided to refuse an application (reg. No. 2003/1960) for redevelopment of the site by the erection of a new building comprising semi - basement, ground, first and second floors for the provision of child care facilities; for the following reason:

The proposed building by virtue of size, scale, height, bulk, design and location would be harmful, in particular to the setting of the adjoining open space of St. Georges Gardens and the character and appearance of this part of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area, contrary to the requirements of policies EN31 (character and appearance of conservation areas) and EN52 (development bordering designated open space) of the London Borough of Camden Unitary Development Plan 2000.

- 3.2 An appeal was lodged in respect of the above refusal, dismissed on the 23rd March 2006. The Inspector found, having considered all matters raised, that the overall concept and realisation of the design was admirable. However, he concluded that the eastern end of the building required revision. In para. 38 of his report he states that, 'Bearing in mind the long history of the scheme, it is regrettable to have to dismiss the appeal because of a relatively small defect in design'. The Inspector was concerned about the impact of the development on sunlight/daylight to four windows at ground and first floor level in the flank wall of William Goodenough House.

3.3 There are no extant planning permissions relating to these premises.

4. CONSULTATIONS

- 4.1 Prior to the submission of the previous applications, The Coram Family consulted widely. The process continued throughout the design development of the scheme with regular user group meetings in which staff and parents were consulted, with more formal consultation with statutory consultees and neighbouring organisations. An exhibition was held at

Collingham Gardens Nursery between 7th - 25th July 2003. The exhibition was advertised locally and letters were sent inviting neighbours and neighbouring organisations. Positive written responses were received from English Heritage and CABE, (copies of these letters have been submitted as appendices to the applicant's design report). Also submitted as an appendix to the current submission are comments written by visitors in the exhibition comments book.

Statutory Consultees

English Heritage

- 4.2 English Heritage do not wish to raise an objection to the scheme, which is believed overall to be a well-considered response to its location. English Heritage do however consider that care needs to be taken in the choice of materials for the elevation facing St. George's Gardens, as although the dark red brick proposed is attractive, it could be rather oppressive in this quantity on the north-facing elevation. English Heritage are also strongly of the view that a S.106 agreement should harness benefits for the local area, including further improvements/repairs to the Mortuary Chapel of St. George's Gardens, and the area immediately to the south of the chapel, which was not included on Heritage Lottery funded scheme complete some years ago.

- 4.3 Officer comment re: English Heritage comments:
The area immediately south of the Mortuary Chapel is now occupied by Collingham Gardens Nursery accessed via Henrietta Mews. The Mortuary Chapel is now used as a garden keeper's cottage. Collingham Gardens Nursery site is to be improved as a consequence of the following permission:
On the 30th June 2006 planning permission was granted for the erection of a single storey extension to provide additional accommodation for existing nursery buildings (D1 Use). 2006/1226/P Approved was a sustainable, regenerating project, the majority of which would be achieved by the use of recycled materials, the additional space and environmental improvements responding to local needs. There would no harm to local amenity, transport network, or adverse impact on views from St. George's Gardens or adjacent listed building fabric (the perimeter wall of the Gardens).

Conservation Area Advisory Committee

- 4.4 Bloomsbury CAAC object – This revision does very little to deal with our earlier objections to the original scheme: it is still monolithic, too high, involves demolition of the swimming pool building and a large plane tree. It is also extremely detrimental to the spaces on either side of it, both of which are important places in the conservation area.

Local Groups

- 4.5 The Friends of St. George's Gardens – refer to replacement UDP policies B2 and N3 relating to trees, views and historic landscape. Question comments made by the Inspector in the decision letter dated 23rd March 2006. Remain mystified by the Council's unwillingness to consider the Development Brief. Refer to their previous letters of objection and point out the current adaptations do not alter their opposition to the scheme. The Friends do not oppose development on the site in principle; their hope is that Gregory House may be rebuilt in a first phase, a more modest and appropriate structure for the current needs and means of the Coram Family.

- 4.6 Adjoining Occupiers

	Original
Number of Letters Sent	184
Number of responses Received	05
Number in Support	01

Number of Objections	04
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4.7 A letter of support has been submitted. The consultee has viewed documents, and comments that this seems to be a creative use of space and a solution that makes use of the features in the surrounding area, and will therefore not negatively impinge on St. George's Gardens. In a difficult area in which to create appropriate new buildings, these plans seem to achieve the right balance between 'old' and 'new' and I hope they are approved.

4.8 Objections have been submitted summarised below:

The proposed building is too large and would completely dominate and change the character of St. George's Gardens. Designs are not in keeping with the garden, prefer existing historic buildings. Like the chimney especially. Main concern is height and size of the new building and the relationship with historic buildings adjacent. The Gardens are a listed heritage site and any building which superimposes itself over existing buildings will artificially dominate and impact on the gardens and Regency terrace behind.

4.9 The proposals will do considerable harm to the tranquillity of St. George's Gardens. The high monolithic building running almost the full length of the southern boundary wall will visually overpower the Gardens. Proposed development has none of beneficial characteristics of existing buildings; these provide a neutral background. New development would cast a large shadow and damage sunlight penetration. Consider design of new structure alien to the Gardens. Existing buildings are pleasant and contribute to the conservation area. Object to felling of plane tree.

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 Replacement Unitary Development Plan 2006

5.2 SD1A Sustainable communities complies;
SD6 Amenity for occupiers and neighbours complies;
SD1C Access for all complies;
SD3 Mixed use development complies;
SD2 Planning obligations complies;
SD9C Use of energy and resources complies;
SD10B Contaminated land complies;
S1 and S2 Strategic policies complies;
B1 Design of new development complies;
B2 Design of development large enough to change their context complies;
SD1D Community safety complies;
B6 Listed buildings complies;
B7 Conservation Areas complies;
B8 Archaeology sites and monuments complies;
B9 Views complies;
N2B Development bordering public and private open space complies;
N3A Gardens of Special Historic Interest and London Squares complies;
N6 Nature conservation sites complies;
N7 Protected species and their habitats complies;

N8	Ancient woodlands and trees	complies;
C1	New community uses	complies;
C1D	Child care facilities	complies;
C3	New leisure uses	complies;
C4	Protecting existing D1 provision	complies;
T1	Sustainable transport	complies;
T3	Pedestrians and cycling	complies

Supplementary Planning Guidance

5.3 2.2.3 daylight provision; 3.5 Under 5s provision; 5.1 Green Travel Plans; 3.8 Demolition; 1 Sustainable development

5.4 Bloomsbury Conservation Area Statement

6. ASSESSMENT

6.1 Principal considerations material to the determination of this application are summarised as follows:

- Loss of existing buildings
- Design and impact on St. George's Gardens
- Land use
- Trees/landscaping
- Sunlight/daylight
- Access
- Transport
- Crime prevention
- Plant
- Resources and energy

Loss of existing buildings

6.2 None of the three buildings proposed for demolition are listed or are considered to be of such historic / architectural interest to make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area. Accordingly the 3 tests of PPG15 para 3.16 -19 (demolition of unlisted buildings; criteria to be considered) do not apply.

6.3 The buildings proposed for demolition include the utilitarian offices constructed in 1958 and known as Gregory House, which is basically a bland 2 storey flat roofed box. The adjacent 1890's Swimming Pool with its tall brick chimney is of some interest; in particular it's front elevation that is viewed from within Coram Community Campus. This elevation cannot be seen from the public realm. It is the relatively neutral blank rear elevation that can be seen above the boundary wall from St George's Gardens. Accordingly it is considered that it does not make a positive contribution to the conservation area. The last building proposed for demolition is the brickwork single storey mid-C19 Mortuary building. This is a simple utilitarian brick building of no particular architectural interest.

6.4 Policy B7 states that a replacement building should enhance the conservation area to an appreciably greater extent than the existing building. The inspector described the poorly designed Gregory House as detracting significantly from the character and appearance of the area. Architecturally it has little in common with the massive institution buildings at both ends of the Gardens, with the intimate detail of the rear of Georgian Houses fronting Regent's Square or with palatial Georgian frontages all of which are typical of the

character. The swimming pool has an interesting elevation facing into the campus, which cannot be seen from the gardens. The tall chimney adds a visual focus to the site, but in the main the building presents along and unrelieved elevation to the public, with only the roof visible. The mortuary is a very small building of a similar period to the pool (late Victorian). They do not detract from the area, but have little in common with taller and more imposing architecture of local squares and terraces or with the University and other Institutional buildings. The Inspector found their contribution to the character and appearance of the area neutral at best. He acknowledged that it may be considered that they be perceived as contributing to the unassuming nature of much of the surroundings but in his opinion the elevation they present is dull and detract from the overall appearance of the area, particularly the Gardens.

The Inspector comments in some detail on the contribution the existing buildings make to the character and appearance of the conservation area. He considers that Gregory House detracts significantly from the character and appearance of the area, the swimming pool and mortuary present a dull elevation that detracts from the overall appearance of the area, particularly the gardens. In terms of character and history there is ample evidence locally of the history of William Coram and the Foundling Hospital in the form of the imposing museum, the William Coram statue and Coram's Fields itself. Although some people cherish the swimming pool and mortuary they make a limited contribution to the area, and so the demolition of the existing buildings is accepted provided the new building makes an equal or greater contribution.

There has been no significant change in policy relating to demolition within conservation areas since the Inspector's decision, and therefore it is considered there is no justification for reaching a different view. It is also worth noting that the building has twice been considered for listing and rejected.

Design and impact on St George's Gardens

- 6.5 The application has been assessed for compliance with Replacement UDP policy N2 which states that the Council will not grant planning permission for development bordering public or private open space that it considers would cause harm to its wholeness, appearance and setting, or is likely to intrude on the public enjoyment of the open space. For reasons discussed below, and in the light of the Planning Inspector's comments, Officers conclude that the proposed development, replacing existing buildings adjacent to the boundary wall, would not have an adverse impact on the character, setting or public enjoyment of the Gardens.
- 6.6 The removal of the eastern section of the top floor is welcomed as it gives the proposed building a greater sense of variety and reduces the impact of bulk and massing as viewed from St. George's Gardens. The reduction in height of the proposed building at the east end would also allow a greater proportion of the existing Coram Campus tree canopy to be seen from St. George's Gardens. The Planning Inspector described the atmosphere of the Gardens as one of intimacy, peace, mystery and perhaps slightly eerie in winter. However there are tall buildings nearby reminding one that the city is nearby. In summer when trees are in leaf the feeling of seclusion is exaggerated. The new building would be introduced into this context. The Inspector concluded that the new building, that would only be slightly taller than the existing buildings, would have a formal yet modest appearance, and would reflect and respect the formal character of the wider area, the low buildings on site and the contemplative atmosphere of the Gardens. Regular window spacing and red brick make reference to other buildings in the area. English Heritage commented (current application) that although dark red brick proposed is attractive, it could be rather oppressive in this quality on the north facing elevation. An alternative is not suggested. Should planning

permission be granted, the applicant should be required to submit a sample to enable the Council to ensure that this would be the most appropriate colour for the elevation facing St George's Gardens.

- 6.7 The gardens are already overlooked from Gregory House and student flats in William Goodenough House, and would be more so from the new building, reducing the feeling of seclusion but increasing the security of the Gardens. The Inspector decided that in summer the impact of the building would be reduced by trees in foliage; in winter the lights and proximity of activity would add some warmth. An automatic lighting system would be installed, to limit light pollution.
- 6.8 Sunlight to the Gardens would be reduced by the slight increase in height of the proposed development, in winter this could result in a slightly gloomier aspect. The Inspector commented that there would be ample space for the Gardens to receive sufficient sunlight for them to remain attractive and that there is little evidence to the slight overshadowing would be harmful to wildlife or the status of the site as a Site of Nature Conservation Interest. It is considered that the proposal would comply with policy N7 for the protection of wildlife habitats.
- 6.9 The proposed development would be 1.5m. from the Grade II listed boundary wall, separating the site from St. Georges Gardens. The condition of the wall is of concern to officers as there are significant risks of damage that may be sustained as a result of the development. Should planning permission be granted conditions are recommended to accurately record the condition of the wall prior to the commencement of works, for its protection during the course of the works and for works of repair where necessary on completion of the development.

The Inspector comments in detail on the design of the proposed new building. He considers it to be a worthy replacement for the existing buildings and a laudable essay in addressing the need for change and balancing the current and future needs of an ancient charity with the demands of urban conservation. The Inspector considers there is little evidence that the building would damage the nature conservation interest of the site, or be detrimental to public amenity.

There has been no significant change in policy in relation to design of new buildings within conservation areas, or in relation to development bordering public open spaces such as St. George's Gardens. Consequently it is considered that there is no justification for reaching a different view.

Land use

- 6.10 The Friend's of St. George's have referred to a draft site brief that was prepared in 1991, and went to consultation in late 1991. Following public consultation a further report was presented to Committee on the 14th January 1992 with the recommendation that the draft site brief be used as the basis of all discussions prior to the presentation of a full site brief to committee. Members agreed and noted that the Coram Foundation's revised programme proposed meant that a brief would not be required before mid 1992.
- 6.11 The officer's report dated 14th January 1992 stated that the Coram foundation needed to resolve a number of legal issues and that they were unable to provide the information officers required to complete the brief. The draft prepared was therefore, of necessity, too general and this was the reason it was agreed that it should be used as a basis for discussion only.
- 6.12 The site brief was never finalised and as a consequence it has little planning status. The site was included in the 1993 Deposit Draft Unitary Development Plan Proposals Schedule,

but there is no reference to an approved brief for the site. The site is no longer included in the Proposals Schedule of the Adopted UDP. It is important to note that even if a brief had been adopted, given the length of time that has now elapsed and the significance of the changes in planning policies since 1992, the status of such a brief would now be diminished, and subsequent policies would take priority. As a consequence the brief carries almost no weight in the determination of this application. The Planning Appeal Inspector considered that the brief carried no great weight as it is now old and was the subject of little public scrutiny.

- 6.13 UDP Policy SD3 states that the Council will seek a mix of uses in development, including a contribution to the supply of housing. In considering the policy SD3 the Council will have regard to c) the need and potential for the continuation of an existing use. It is considered that the introduction of a mix of uses here could compromise the viability of the development, and the increase in community facilities within the Borough is welcomed. Improvements to the provision of activities and services currently provided on site form a valuable local and regional resource. It is therefore considered appropriate to waive the need for a mixed-use scheme to achieve the community benefit that the proposed facilities would bring. The scheme would comply with UDP Policy C1A, the Council seeks to ensure that a range of suitable premises for community facilities, including childcare and health, and education, are retained to meet both local and wider needs.
- 6.14 The Training and Arts Centre proposed would include training space with seating for 150 people, four group rooms and a range of other specialist areas including facilities for arts activities. UDP policy C3 states that the Council will grant planning permission for suitable leisure development in the Central London Area. It is therefore appropriate for this site.
- 6.15 It has been identified that there is a continuing need to protect and retain facilities and services that provide support to local residential communities within the Central London Area. As a consequence the UDP emphasises the importance of increasing provision. The proposed development is strongly supported by policy SD1A; it will provide the Central London Area with an enhanced and comprehensive community facility.

Trees/landscaping

- 6.16 One large plane tree (GB7 on the applicant's plan) would be lost if the development proposed is permitted. The Inspector considered that in the context of the numerous trees in the area, the loss would not be significant, and it would be replaced. The applicant's arboriculture report given the nature of the use of the site and confined space, the retention of this tree is likely to have implications for safety and risk assessment. A semi mature beech suppressed by a larger plane (GB26), a small purple plum adjacent to the beech and a fig growing close to the building would be also be felled.
- 6.17 Only GB26 (a plane) is protected by the TPO for the site. The TPO covers a number of trees growing mainly in the south-western corner of the site. GB6, GB26 and GB10 are all within close proximity of the construction work. These and other trees around the access route to the site will require protection during construction works. As a consequence should planning permission be granted it should be made conditional on the submission and approval of a method statement for the protection of trees on and adjoining the site during the construction process.

The Inspectors comments in relation to trees and landscaping are as follows: "One large plane tree would be lost in the redevelopment. In the context of the numerous trees in the area it would not be significant and it would be replaced. On the evidence there is a significant possibility that the tree is unstable. The scheme conforms to Policy EN35. Part of the purpose of the new building is to replace

temporary structures on the site. When the land on which they stand is released, there would be an important opportunity to relandscape the area. That could be achieved by imposing an appropriate condition requiring a comprehensive landscape scheme to be approved.”

It is unclear what evidence (that the tree is unstable) the Inspector refers to as the Council has no clear evidence to demonstrate this. What is clear is that the proposed building would be likely to result in the loss of tree roots and require crown reduction so that the tree is likely to become unstable and would be lost prematurely. The Council previously accepted the loss of the tree provided a high quality landscaping scheme, including a replacement tree, is provided. The relevant policies on trees has not changed and so it is considered that there is no justification for reaching a different conclusion.

Landscape Design

- 6.18 Should the current application be approved, the applicant will commission a landscape architect to develop a high quality landscape scheme for the Council's approval. The proposed site includes an area on which temporary structures had been erected. Land on which they stood has now been released providing an opportunity to re-landscape the area. Policy N6 states that where development is permitted, the use of conditions or planning obligations will be considered to ensure the protection and enhancement of the site's biodiversity.
- 6.19 The applicant's Planning Design Report states that, 'if required' green roofs could be introduced. A 'butterfly' roof is proposed with surfaces facing in, the visual impact would therefore be limited. A green roof would provide an additional habitat for wildlife, contribute to the energy conserving features of the building, and provide an element of sustainable urban drainage (SUDS). However alternative strategies are proposed for energy conservation, and sustainable urban drainage, and design and planting for biodiversity and visual interest could form part of the scheme of landscape design. The Council's Landscape Architect therefore concludes that a green roof need not be a requirement of planning approval. The applicant has submitted outline proposals for SUDS. Rain/storm water would be collected from surrounding surfaces and from the roof and treated for an end use as 'grey' water for flushing toilets. The 'butterfly' roof proposed would facilitate the collection of rainwater. Details of SUDS should form part of the provision of a hard and soft landscape scheme.

Daylight/Sunlight

- 6.20 In considering sunlight and daylight to windows in part of the flank wall (west) of William Goodenough House, adjacent to the east end of the proposed development, the Inspector agreed that the windows facing south could be discounted because they serve WCs and bathrooms. A site visit carried out by a planning officer confirmed the position of bedrooms and the stairwell/lift core. Of concern are four windows that serve bedrooms WG/01, /02 (2 windows to a ground floor bedroom), and W01/01 and W01/02 (2 windows to a first floor bedroom) of drawing number LOC/801. Other west facing windows would also be affected but are currently better lit. The overall effect of the previous scheme (2003/1960) would have been that an existing narrow but short light well between the two buildings would be replaced by one that is wider, but slightly longer and substantially deeper. The westerly outlook from the worst affected flats would have been impaired because of the proximity of a three storey structure, some 4m higher than existing. The Inspector agreed that lighting effects would be ameliorated by the fact that some of the bedrooms are lit by two windows, however that did not alter his view that a reduction in light to these rooms would be unacceptable.

- 6.21 The applicant's sunlight/daylight study submitted with the current application has looked at the four windows of concern to the Inspector plus another two at second floor level W02/01 and /02. The main methods of assessment included the Average Daylight Factor (ADF) for daylight analysis and the Annual Probable (APSH) for sunlight analysis using a 3D computer model. Each of these methods is recommended by the British Research Establishment (BRE) Guide to Good Practice, which is referred to in policy SD6. The B.R.E. report (p. 5) specifies the need to assess the impact of development on daylight distribution to living rooms, dining rooms and kitchens. The report states that bedrooms should also be analysed, although they are less important.
- 6.22 As a consequence of amendments to the east end of the building proposed the daylight analysis reveals that currently all rooms assessed receive levels of light in excess of BRE ADF target values for bedrooms. The results indicate that light to the ground floor bedroom would improve as a result of the demolition of the existing building and erection of new. The sunlight analysis also indicates that that all windows assessed would fully comply with BRE recommendations for APSH and winter sunlight. The applicant's report concludes that the analysis undertaken demonstrates that the impact of the proposed development would create negligible to minor beneficial impact to William Goodenough House. The development therefore complies with policy SD6.

Access

- 6.23 The applicant has submitted an access statement. Existing disabled car parking spaces would be retained but re-located from the west of the site to a more convenient location. Access to the building would be by ramps, one either side of the building. The ramps, circulation areas and door widths would comply with part M of the building regulations, nevertheless should the applications be approved, an informative will remind the applicant that the Council's Access Officer may require more details. Upper floors would be accessed via two disabled lifts; one at each of the east and west entrances. The training Centre would be served by the lift to the main entrance only. Disabled refuge would be provided at each landing of the upper floors of stairs for use in the event of an emergency.

Transport

- 6.24 Given the use and the fact that it exists, Officers consider that the scheme itself would not be expected to produce large numbers of vehicle trips, or represent a significant transport problem. The Inspector declared that there is no convincing evidence that the development would create a harmful increase in traffic. A Transport Assessment, in order to comply with T1B, is therefore considered unnecessary. However since there may be an increase in staff numbers, the existing car park should be prioritised for staff or people with disabilities. A Green Travel Plan is required as part of a legal agreement. The provision of cycle parking and promotion of cycling should form part of the Travel Plan. There would be no net increase in residential units, therefore there is no requirement for the units that would be relocated into the new building from existing premises to be designated as 'car-free'. Existing residential units are located on the first floor of Gregory House.
- 6.25 Policy T3 states that the Council will seek to improve conditions for the convenience and safety of pedestrians. The applicant has stated para. 8.0 of the Planning and Conservation Area report submitted that landscape proposals will incorporate Green Travel Plan requirements and provide a clear pedestrian route linking Mecklenburgh and Brunswick Squares. Pedestrian and vehicular routes will be separated and also incorporated and an area for cycle parking and a buggy store.

Crime prevention

- 6.26 The north side of the building behind the existing boundary wall would be gated at the west end as requested by officers. CCTV cameras would be installed. The Crime prevention Officer has raised some concerns and has suggested liaison with the applicant to discuss the details of a Crime Prevention Plan that would be required and included as one of the Heads of Terms of a Legal Agreement.

Plant

- 6.27 Condensers associated with the air handling unit would be located at roof level above the central circulation area to the west as far as practically possible from the neighbouring residential buildings to mitigate external noise nuisance. Details will be required and can be requested by condition.

Resources and energy

- 6.28 The applicant has submitted an Environmental Outline Design Report. The Planning Design Report also submitted gives details of materials and sustainable environmental design (para. 5.0) The Planning Design Report states that whilst not currently included in the proposed design, because cost and economic viability or feasibility of integration have not been studied in sufficient detail, the applicant has declared that measures listed would be considered to achieve stated targets if required. One way of assessing whether a proposed development would incorporate sustainable design principles is by undertaking a BREEAM assessment. The scheme submitted would be expected to achieve a Very Good or Excellent rating. Should the application be approved a BREEAM report will be required and would be included as one of the Heads of Terms of a legal agreement. The report should include the application of renewable energy technologies, referred to in the applicant's 'Environmental Outline Design'. In order to comply with policy SD9C development of 1000m² or more should incorporate renewable energy production equipment to provide at least 10% of predicted energy requirements.

7. CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The reason for the previous refusal has been re-examined in the light of comments made by the Planning Appeal Inspector. The Inspector concluded that the scheme represents a considered response to the need for change without sacrificing the quality of the conservation area as a whole or that of St. George's Gardens and the immediate surroundings. The loss of daylight/sunlight to specific windows of concern to the Inspector has now been satisfactorily resolved as a consequence of amendments to the design of the new building. Officers support this proposal for enhanced social and community facilities that would form a valuable local resource and would help meet a range of needs within the area. The delivery of community and cultural services in the neighbourhood and a wider catchment area will be increased. The design of the new building is acceptable, particularly in light of the appeal Inspector's views, outstanding issues can be addressed by the imposition of conditions, including a detailed landscape design that would benefit the site itself as well the surrounding area. It is considered that the new building will preserve the character and appearance of this part of the conservation area, the setting of nearby listed buildings, and the character of St. George's Gardens.

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 To grant planning permission subject to condition and the satisfactory conclusion of a Section 106 Planning Obligation covering the following heads of Terms:
- 1) A final BREEAM assessment to be submitted prior to the commencement of development that demonstrates that the proposed building will achieve the BREEAM rating of Very Good or Excellent incorporating measures to ensure the inclusion of renewable energy production equipment to provide at least 10% of predicted energy requirements;
 - 2) A Green Travel Plan; and
 - 3) A Crime Prevention Plan

10. RECOMMENDATION 2

- 10.1 In the event that the applicant fails to conclude the Section 106 within the 13-week period, that it be delegated for permission to be refused on grounds relating to sustainability, lack of Green Travel Plan and failure to address 'secured by design' considerations.

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