

Delegated Report Members' briefing		Analysis sheet		Expiry Date:	04/10/2006
			Consultation Expiry Date:	14/09/2006	
Officer			Application Number(s)		
Jenny Fisher			2006/3683/P		
Application Address			Drawing Numbers		
21b Brownlow Mews London WC1N 2LA					
PO 3/4	Area Team Signature	C&UD	Authorised Officer Signature	Date:	
Proposal(s) Amendment to the orientation of stair enclosures installed to the centre of the roof as a variation to planning permission dated 9th March 2005 (ref. 2004/4274/P) for the development of a vacant site by the construction of 4x 3-storey plus roof terrace 3-bedroom residential dwellings.					
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	14	No. of responses	00	No. of objections	00
Summary of consultation responses:	<p>A letter of objection has been submitted by the occupant of one of the Doughty Street premises that backs onto the site. The objector is concerned about the impact of the development on daylight entering her property and privacy. Comments on the fact that amendments to the approved scheme have commenced prior to planning approval.</p> <p>Also concerned about noise, fumes and environmental pollution, which the objector considers will result if the units are allowed.</p> <p>Objector discusses the planning process in general and referral of works in progress to the Council's Enforcement Team.</p>					
	<p><u>Officer comment</u></p> <p>Officer site visit to the objector's property (05/09/2006)</p> <p>Drawings taken to the site meeting for discussion with the objector and as a means of describing what has already been approved and the manner in which the applicant now wishes to amend the approved scheme. Photos taken the day before (04/09/2006) from terraces of the development looking the rear of the objector's house, were also taken to the site visit. The purpose of the photos was to enable the objector to have a better idea of whether or not a person standing on one of the terraces would have clear views into rooms to the rear of her property.</p> <p>Matters raised by the objector area discussed in the assessment of this report.</p>					
	<p>The letter was followed by an e-mail (11/09/2006) reporting that the framework for the screen approved, to be erected on the outer edge of the terrace, is in place. Objector concerned about overlooking and inviting a site visit.</p>					
	<p><u>Officer comment</u></p> <p>Site visit 20/09/2006 from terraces of development looking towards the rear of Doughty Street properties. Also discussed within the assessment.</p>					
	<p>A second objector from the occupant of a Doughty Street premises considers the amended scheme completely ruins the skyline. Concerned about a possible precedent having been set for the rest of the low-rise mews.</p> <p>A further letter of objection describes the application as involving a considerable extension of floor area and mass and the insertion of new windows not 18m. away and overlooking the rear of Doughty Street houses. Objects to the installation of air conditioning units.</p> <p><u>Officer comment</u></p> <p>This is not an accurate description of the current scheme, described in detail in the assessment of the report.</p> <p>A letter of objection has sent from one of the office buildings backing onto the site. Consider loss of light and overlooking would be emphasised by proposed amendments. A letter from the occupant of a second residential property that backs onto the site objects on the grounds of loss of light,</p>					

	<p>privacy and noise generated by air conditioning units proposed.</p> <p>A letter of objection has also been received from the Brownlow Mews building that backs onto the site. The building is used by an American university based in New York City for its London Dramatic Academy. A 14 week programme of acting and drama for American students takes place twice a year. Objector believes air conditioning units would be adjacent to 2 treatment rooms (Alexander Technique). In summer the window of these rooms and also the student kitchen are open for fresh air. Hot air and noise generated by units would have an impact on the use of these rooms.</p> <p><u>Officer comment</u></p> <p>The installation of the condenser units has been removed from this application. The applicant has been requested to provide more information without which officers cannot determine the likely impact on adjoining occupiers. The additional information will be submitted with a new application for planning permission. Consultees will be re-consulted.</p>
<p>CAAC/Local groups* comments: *Please Specify</p>	<p><u>Bloomsbury CAAC</u></p> <p>The Committee felt that this revision was not an improvement, and would appear to make the proposal appear taller.</p>

Site Description

The vacant site is tucked away behind the unlisted terrace of Brownlow Mews and the gardens of the grade II listed buildings in Doughty Street. It is accessed through an existing entrance via Brownlow Mews. No. 21a, adjacent to the site entrance, was granted permission on appeal for the retention of the use as a courier head office and control centre. Nos. 22 and 23 backing on to the site are in use as a drama academy. One of the Doughty Street properties (no. 51) backing onto the site is in residential use; no. 48 is the Dickens Museum; the University of Delaware uses no. 49 and nos. 50, 52 and 53 are in office use.

Access to the Mews from Guildford Street to the north is under an archway, there is clear access from Roger Street to the south. The Mews contains a mix of commercial and residential uses, including a public house; it is subject to daytime parking restrictions other than in a small number of residents' parking bays.

Brownlow Mews runs parallel with, and is a short distance from Gray's Inn Road. The site is within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area.

Relevant History

25th May 2001 pp (reg. no. PS9804853/R4) for part re-development and change of use from car park and B1 to sui generis education use comprising classrooms, office and 12 single or double student study bedrooms which include s/c shower rooms and kitchenettes. Legal agreement for car-free housing and to control use of residential element of the scheme. NOT IMPLEMENTED

8th October 2003 variation of pp (25/05/2001) involving alterations to the roof pitch, rear fenestration and main entrance to Brownlow Mews proposed. NOT IMPLEMENTED

On the 9th March 2005 (reg. No. 2004/4274/P) DC Sub-Committee granted planning permission for: The development of a vacant site by the construction of 4 x 3 storey plus roof terrace 3 bedroom residential dwellings

On the 7th April 2006 (reg. No.2006/0791/P)

The installation of a new entrance gate as an amendment to planning permission ref: 2004/4274/P, dated 10/03/2005 (for the development of a vacant site by the construction of 4 x 3 storey plus roof terrace 3 bedroom residential dwellings.)

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 SD6; S1; S2; B1; SD7B; SD8; B3; B6; B7; Appendix1

SPG – 2.8.13 other roof additions; 4.8 plant and machinery

Draft SPG noise and vibration

Bloomsbury CA Statement

Assessment

Approved (09/03/2005)

Internal staircases, with a small store room included, would provide access to the roof of each of the four dwellings approved. For ease of identification, they will be referred to in this report as house 1, 2, 3 and 4; house 1 being at the southern end of the site. A staircase enclosure would be installed at either end of the development for house 1 and house 4, and two adjacent to each other would be installed in the centre of the development serving the two central dwellings (houses 2 and 3).

Proposed amendment

The two central staircase enclosures and store rooms would be turned 90⁰ running parallel with the rear of Brownlow Mews buildings, this has achieved more usable space. The impact of the development as approved has been minimised by setting back first and second floors from the rear of Doughty Street premises. As a consequence the setting of listed buildings would not be adversely affected. It is considered that the proposed amendment by re-orientating stair enclosures at roof level, would preserve the setting of the buildings. The proposal therefore complies with Replacement UDP Policy B6.

As viewed from the rear of Doughty Street properties:

A teak trellis with planting would be erected on the outer edge of the roof facing the rear of Doughty Street premises. It would have a slightly curved top. The visible part of the stair enclosure as viewed from Doughty Street properties would be 0.6m. (height) along part of the elevation and 0.3m. along other sections where the screen is taller.

As approved the adjacent stair enclosures in the centre of the roof would be 4.1m. (width); proposed the width, as a result of the re-orientation, would be 12m. It would be set back 3.5m. from the trellis as approved. There would be no increase in height of the enclosures.

The impact of the proposed amendment has been considered in the light of factors specified by policy SD6. The re-orientation of the stair enclosure would not result in loss of light to adjoining premises or create opportunities for overlooking. The application therefore complies with policy SD6.

The proposed amendment is considered insignificant in design terms and would not result in harm to the setting of listed buildings or character and appearance of the conservation area.

The majority of issues raised by objectors were considered when the original application for development was considered. Nevertheless officers have recently carried out site visits on a number of occasions for views from one of the Doughty Street residences and towards the property from the site under construction.

Given the existing 5-7 metre high walls on the boundary with Doughty Street properties (west) and the set back of the design proposed, it was considered that there would be no loss of sunlight/ daylight to gardens and windows. There are no windows in the remaining three boundaries to the site that would be affected. Second floor windows of the development would be set back 5m. from the rear boundary of the site. 18m. from windows to the rear of the main elevation of Doughty Street properties, 11m. from the rear of extensions to those premises. The edge of the roof terrace would be the same distance away. However a 2.1 m. high screen would provide privacy for the occupants of the new development as well as occupants of Doughty Street properties.

It is considered that the additional 8m. width of the enclosure that would face the rear of Doughty Street properties would not result in loss of daylight to those properties. There are much taller buildings beyond fronting Gray's Inn Road and the roof structures are set back sufficiently to avoid restricting daylight to surrounding premises.

Officers have carried out site visits and looked into the rear of Doughty Street properties from the second floor terrace and from the roof. It would be difficult to look over the top of the trellis that would enclose the roof. At the lower level a frosted glass screen would be installed at the roof edge 1.3m. in

height. It may be possible to peer over the top towards Doughty Street windows. French doors have been installed within an extension at first floor level to the rear of No. 51. The doors provide access from a study to a small terrace. From a position opposite the doors, but at 2nd floor level, a high wall prevents any view out from lower levels of the development, it was difficult to see into the room. The Replacement SPG describes living rooms, bedrooms and kitchens as being most sensitive to overlooking. The distance between the outer edge of the second floor terrace and rear of the main Doughty Street dwelling is 15m. and 16.5m. from the edge of the roof. It was difficult to see into rooms from these viewpoints and this was prior to the installation of trellis and planting and completion of the second floor screen, both intended to limit opportunities for overlooking. This is an inner city location and the site that has been developed was in a state of dereliction prior to development. The principle of development was established with the 2001 approval and to the north and south no open space (apart from gardens and terraces) remains between the rear of Doughty Street and Brownlow Mews properties.

Recommend approval for the re-orientation of the central roof stair enclosures. The scheme complies with relevant Replacement UDP policies and Supplementary Planning Guidance. The amendment would not result in harm to amenities of adjoining occupiers, setting of listed buildings or character and appearance of the conservation area.

Disclaimer

This is an internet copy for information purposes. If you require a copy of the signed original please contact the Culture and Environment Department on (020) 7974 5613