

APPLICANT:

Jill Worldwide Corporation

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

IN SUPPORT OF AN APPLICATION FOR FULL PLANNING PERMISSION FOR

**THE CONVERSION AND CHANGE OF USE OF
THE REAR OF NO.26 ARGYLE SQUARE, LONDON WC1**

**FROM B1 / D1 USE TO RESIDENTIAL USE (USE CLASS C3) COMPRISING
3 RESIDENTIAL UNITS, INCLUDING AN EXTENSION AT ROOF LEVEL, AND
RETAINING 120SQ.M OF B1 USE**

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**EXPLANATORY STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF A FULL PLANNING APPLICATION FOR THE
CONVERSION AND CHANGE OF USE OF THE REAR OF NO.26 ARGYLE SQUARE, LONDON WC1
FROM B1 / D1 USE TO USE CLASS C3, COMPRISING THREE RESIDENTIAL UNITS INCLUDING AN
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1.0 GENERAL BACKGROUND

1.1 Introduction

This document accompanies an application for full planning permission for:

**"The conversion and change of use of the rear of the building from B1 / D1
use to residential use (Use Class C3) comprising 3 self-contained dwellings,
including an extension at roof level, and retaining 120sq.m of the B1 use."**

This document sets out the current planning situation and describes the proposed development of the rear of No.26 Argyle Square. A separate Design and Access Statement, following the guidelines set out by CABE, is included as part of this application and should be read in conjunction with the information and illustrative material set out in this Explanatory Statement.

The application has been submitted by Adrian Salt And Pang Limited (ASAP) on behalf of the freehold owner of the property, Jill Worldwide Corporation (JWC), and follows a pre-application submission made to the Council in June 2006. The pre-application submission contained a full set of design drawings and a photomontage illustrating the proposed scheme. The outcome of that pre-application submission is discussed below.

1.2 Pre-application Advice

The development proposal described in the pre-application submitted to the Council in June 2006 comprised, in addition to the conversion of the existing building, a two-storey extension on the roof.

The advice from the planning officer who reviewed the scheme (Mr Alex Bushell) was that the principle of a mixed-use scheme was appropriate in this location, but that the design needed modifying, in particular:

- 1) The two-storey extension was excessive in that it obscured the view of the rear elevation of the Georgian terrace. The advice was to reduce the two-storey extension down to one-storey extension as this would allow more of the listed building to be visible from Loxham Street.
- 2) The roof extension needs, if possible, to appear 'lighter'.
- 3) One of the rooms in the lower ground floor did not have a window and this needed to be resolved.

The overall comment from the Council was that, subject to reducing the roof extension to one-storey, the proposed development would be an improvement on what was there at present.

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1.3 Listed Building Status

The building at the rear of No.26 Argyle Square occupies what were the rear gardens to Nos.26 and 27 Argyle Square (see Fig.P.1: Location Plan). This extension is relatively modern, built in 1963/4 to provide function rooms to a club, and is of no architectural merit. However, because it originally was part of No.26 Argyle Square, which is a Grade II listed building (Georgian, built 1840 - 49), it was listed by default.

Unfortunately, the rear extension cannot be deleted from the statutory list, but acknowledgement that it is of no historic or architectural importance was confirmed when the listing description was amended in June 2006 by English Heritage with the following:

"The 1960s extension to the rear of Nos.26 and 27 is not of special interest"

Therefore, proposals for the rear of No.26 Argyle Square, which are the subject of this planning application, will need Listed Building Consent, but that the Council should consider this only as a formality. Accordingly, an application for Listed building Consent accompanies this application.

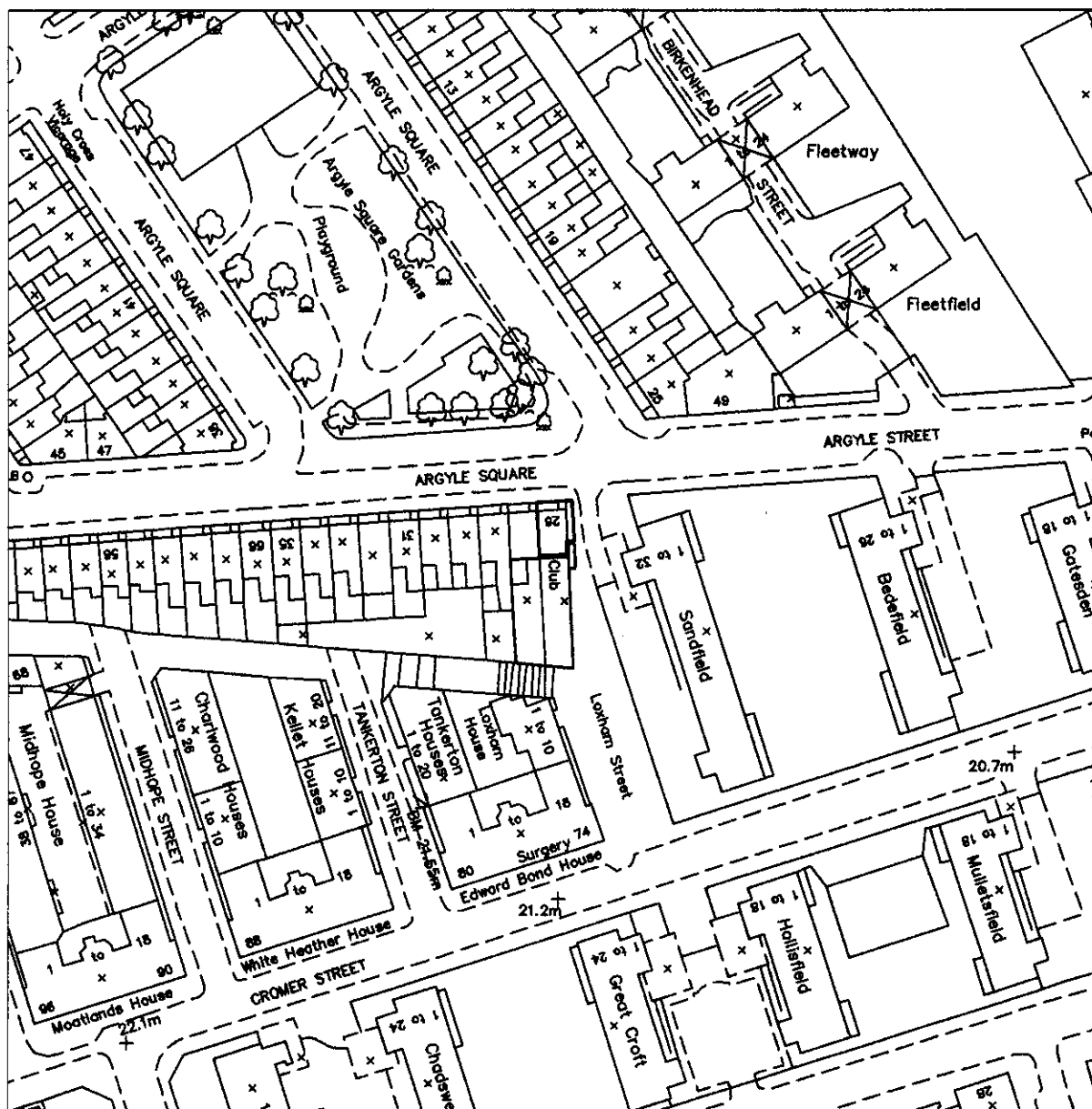
1.4 History of No.26 Argyle Square



The building of No.26 Argyle Square was originally part of a much longer terrace of residential Georgian buildings, each with rear gardens backing onto Argyle Walk. However, it would appear that bomb damage in World War II removed a substantial number of buildings in Argyle Street, to the east of No.26 Argyle Square, leaving No.26 as an end-of-terrace. Repairs made to the party wall, to make it a flank wall, are visible, and the existing front entrance in the flank wall is clearly not original (see Photo 1).

Following the end of the War, the S.E. St Pancras Unionist Club acquired the premises of both Nos.26 and 27 Argyle Square and, up until 2003, the two properties were designated as having a use as a club (Use Class: 'sui generis'). During the period that the two premises were used as a club, No.27 Argyle Square was used solely to accommodate the staff who worked in the club.

At about the same time, the Council acquired the adjoining site containing the bombed buildings and, in the 1960's, constructed a row of 6-storey blocks of flats - Sandfield House (with 32 flats), Bedefield House (with 26 flats) and Gotesden House (with 18 flats). Sandfield is the block adjoining Nos.26 Argyle Square (see Photo 2). At about the same time as Sandfield was built, Loxham Street was extended to join with Argyle Square, providing a pedestrian link between Cromer Street and Argyle Square (see Photos 4 and 5).

In 1965/66, planning consent was granted by the London County Council for a two-storey, flat-roofed, rear extension that spanned across the back of both Nos.26 and 27 Argyle Square, on land that had previously been the rear gardens to the two properties. This extension was constructed in 1966/67. In 1974, the south side of Argyle Square (Nos.26 - 35) was listed Grade II (Ref. No: 17948 90 1) and, by default (as described above), the listing included the rear extension to Nos.26 and 27, even though it had only been built less than 10 years earlier.



-  APPLICATION SITE
 ADJOINING LAND OWNED BY APPLICANT



**No.26 ARGYLE SQUARE
LONDON WC1H 8AP**

FIG. P.1: LOCATION PLAN

Scale 1:1250

26 JUNE 2006

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1.5 Recent Planning History of the Premises

In 2000, following the granting of planning permission and listed building consent, a new entrance was installed in the flank wall to No.26. This entrance enabled independent access to the rear extension without the need to use the front of the building. At about this time, No.27 Argyle Square, which had remained independent of No.26, was sold by the, now renamed, St Pancras Conservative Club. No.27 Argyle Square is now a set of flats.

In 2002, the St Pancras Conservative Club decided to sell the remainder of the club premises, i.e. No.26, and the 1960's extension at its rear. The whole property was acquired by the present owner who is also the Applicant of this planning application submission. Following the purchase of the premises, a number of planning applications were submitted, granted consent, and work carried out:

Permission (1) Temporary change of use of the rear part of the property from a club (Class D2) to exhibition use (Class D1) (retrospective application, 11 October 2003 to 9 November 2003, Ref: 2003/2422/P), granted consent 14 November 2003. (Implemented)

Permission (2) Planning permission was granted on 6 February 2004 (Ref.2003/3160/P) for change of use from a club to mixed use, including exhibition space (Class D1), office use (Class B1), with ancillary residential accommodation at second and third floors. **Within this consent, the permitted uses that are relevant to this application are exhibition space and office use.** (Part Implemented)

Permission (3) In parallel with the application for the above, retrospective listed building consent (Ref.2003/3164/L) was granted on 6 February 2004, for various works carried out on the inside of the property.

Permission (4) On 26 March 2004, planning permission (Ref:2004/0530/P) was granted for the change of use of the premises from club, exhibition space (Class D1), office use (Class B1) and residential use (Class C3), to office use (Class B1) in the two-storey rear extension and a single dwelling house (Class C3) in the rest of the building. **Within this consent, the permitted use that is relevant to this application is office use.** (Part implemented)

Permission (5) On 29 June 2004, planning permission (Ref:2004/1995/P) was granted for the installation of planter boxes, alteration to the external doors, installation of a pedestrian ramp and CCTV, and installation of a new staircase to the front basement. (Partly implemented)

Permission (6) In parallel with the application for the various small works listed above, listed building consent was granted for them on 29 June 2004 (Ref.2004/1996/L).

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Permission (7) Planning permission was granted on 30 September 2005,
(Ref.2005/3077/P) for conversion of the single dwelling at the front
of the property into 2 self-contained units, comprising basement
studio flat and a 3-bedroom unit on the upper floors, with associated
internal and external alterations. (Part implemented)

Permission (8) In parallel with the application for the above, listed building consent
(Ref.2005/3078/L) was granted on 30 September 2005.

It should be noted that the reference for the numbering of the property in this application
corresponds to the above applications as follows:

- No.26 (Front) Argyle Square (Georgian part of the building) in this document is
referred to as No.26A Argyle Square in the above applications.
- No.26 (Rear) Argyle Square in this document is referred to as No.26 Argyle Square in
the above applications.

1.6 Reason for the Proposed Development

Planning permissions (2) and (4) above were implemented, creating at the rear of No.26 a
large usable space with its own entrance and ancillary facilities (kitchen, WCs and storage).
These permissions gave the owner the flexibility to use the 2-storey extension as an
exhibition space (D1) and/or for office use (B1).

However, despite the premises being in an immaculate condition, it should be noted that the
rear extension has remained vacant since 2002, except during the short period of the
temporary planning consent (Permission (1) above). The lack of demand for office use and
exhibition, art and fashion-related business in this particular location has meant that the
premises have never been occupied.

It is unsustainable to have this building lying vacant and therefore the owner sought advice
from local property agents as to the best use of the property. The response was that
residential use was in strong demand and that, whilst office use was also in demand, only
small units were required. Accordingly, the owner investigated converting the rear extension
into residential use, whilst still retaining some office use, albeit the latter scaled down in size.

This application reflects the outcome of those investigations.

The net area of the site that is the subject of this planning application is 216sq.m.

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2.0 DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPERTY AND SURROUNDINGS

2.1 Location

The terrace fronting Argyle Square, built of yellow stock brick, is listed Grade II. The building of No.26, on its frontage to Argyle Square, has 4 storeys and a basement (see Photo 3) and comprises two residential units. Most of the other buildings in the terrace are in hotel use.

Argyle Square itself is an attractive small public park (0.9 acres) with mature trees.

The rear of No.26 Argyle Square, which is the subject of this application, is a large two-storey extension, built in the 1960's, which extends across the back of Nos.26 and 27 that are part of the Georgian terrace (see Photo 4).

2.2 Description of the Rear of No.26 Argyle Square

The rear of No.26 Argyle Square is an approximately rectangular two-storey rear extension building with a flat roof (see Figs. MU-EX1, MU-EX2 and MU-EX3).

The extension, which was constructed in the late 1960's to provide function rooms to the St Pancras Conservative Club, is of two-storeys (lower ground and ground level), flat-roofed, and constructed in reinforced concrete and faced in London stock bricks. This extension, which is only accessible from its own entrance, has a footprint of approximately 216sq.m and a total gross external floor area of 353sq.m (excluding the roof terrace).

The entrance to No.26 is situated at the side of the building and accessed from the pedestrian footpath of Loxham Street. The entrance opens into a small hall of 6sq.m, with a staircase of 9 steps leading up to ground floor level, and a staircase of 9 steps leading down to the lower ground floor level.

The lower ground floor has a floor-to-ceiling height of 2.8m, with beams supporting the upper floor of 0.4m deep, giving a clear floor-to-under-beam height of 2.4m. The ground floor level has a floor-to-ceiling height of approximately 3.5m, with beams supporting the roof of 0.4m deep, giving a clear floor-to-under-beam height of 3.1m. Both floors have a clear span, with no internal walls or partitions. The floors on both levels have a concrete finish and the walls are plastered and painted white.

At ground level, in addition to the main office floor space, there is a store of approximately 8sq.m, and (reached by three steps) a kitchen of approximately 9sq.m, and a WC. At lower ground level, in addition to the main office floor space, there is a small, at-grade, WC.

There are two emergency exits, one from ground level and one from lower ground level. Both emergency exits are reached by a small flight of stairs and both open onto the pedestrian alleyway of Argyle Walk.

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Access onto the roof of the extension, which is not used except as a fire safety assembly point, is currently from the landing between the first and second floors of No.26 (the front part of the building). The roof has a 1m-high parapet brick wall around it, topped by a discrete 1m-high metal fence with supporting uprights at approximately 2m intervals.

The windows in the extension are metal and have security grills over them. Despite the use of London stock bricks as the facing material, the overall impression of the extension is that it is a utilitarian building, with somewhat clumsy external detailing, that has little or no architectural merit.

It should be noted that the rear extension of No.26 Argyle Square is now separate from the original Georgian building fronting Argyle Square.

2.3 Surrounding Development

The east side of No.26 is bordered by Loxham Street, a pedestrianised thoroughfare linking Argyle Square with Cromer Street (see Photos 4 and 5). On the opposite side of Loxham Street from No.26 is Sandfield House, a 6-storeyed residential block of flats, built in the late '60's, which is owned and managed by the Council (see Photo 6).

The south side of No.26 Argyle Square is bordered by the continuation of the pedestrianised thoroughfare of Loxham Street, where it is known as 'Argyle Walk' (see Photo 7). Argyle Walk leads westwards to Tankerton Street and, beyond that, to Midhope Street.

Loxham House (No.1-10 Loxham Street) is situated opposite the south elevation of No.26 and comprises a 1940's, 6-storeyed, residential block. There are north-facing windows in Loxham House which overlook the rear of No.26 (see Photo 8).

On the west side of the rear of No.26 is a party wall which forms the boundary with the neighbouring building which is at the rear of No.28 Argyle Square. Immediately adjacent to the rear of No.26 is a pitched-roof, single-storey building, 3m-high, which is vacant and in a derelict condition. This building, which fronts onto Argyle Walk, appears to have been in some form of industrial or storage use.

Beyond No.28 Argyle Square is a new development, nearly completed, on the site of the old Tankerton Works, and called 'Tankerton House'. This 3-storey development, which is accessed from Argyle Walk, contains 4 dwellings (Planning Permission ref. no.: 2003/1714), comprising 2 x 1-bedroomed flats (on the ground floor) and 2 x 3-bedroomed duplexes (on 1st and 2nd floors).

'Tankerton House' has a total of 13 to 14 habitable rooms, giving a density of 1,040 - 1,120 habitable rooms per hectare.

Tankerton House has been constructed to be slightly over 9m-high above ground level and is approximately 1.5m higher than the top of the parapet wall to the flat roof of the rear of No.26 Argyle Square (see Photo 9).

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There are a total of 5 windows in the eastern elevation of Tankerton House, 2 windows at first floor level and 3 windows at second floor level - four of these windows are to habitable rooms. These four windows, because they overlook the rear of No.26, have the effect of restricting the extent to which the rear of No.26 can be enlarged (because of rights-of-light and privacy issues) and this has been taken into account in the design of the proposed scheme.