

Delegated Report		Analysis sheet		Expiry Date:	26/09/2006
		N/A / attached		Consultation Expiry Date:	01/09/2006
Officer			Application Number(s)		
Elaine Quigley			2006/3581/P		
Application Address			Drawing Numbers		
British Museum Great Russell Street London WC1B 3DG					
PO 3/4	Area Team Signature	C&UD	Authorised Officer Signature	Date:	
Proposal(s)					
Removal and rebuilding of external boundary retaining wall along East Road.					
Recommendation(s):		To grant planning permission subject to conditions			
Application Type:		Full Planning Permission			

Conditions or Reasons for Refusal:	Refer to Draft Decision Notice					
Informatives:						
Consultations						
Adjoining Occupiers:	No. notified	04	No. of responses	02	No. of objections	00
Summary of consultation responses:	No third party letters of representation received as a result of the display of a site notice (expired 01/09/2006).					
CAAC/Local groups* comments: <small>*Please Specify</small>	<p><u>Bloomsbury CAAC</u> – no comments</p> <p><u>Conservation and Urban Design (Trees)</u> – Concerns raised regarding the inadequate measures for the protection of adjacent trees by previously refused application 2006/1974/P have been addressed by the confirmation that duckbill anchor system is to be use to strengthen the wall which minimises root disturbance by driving the rods fitted with a self opening anchor through the root area.</p> <p><u>Conservation and Urban Design</u> – Additional methods would not have an effect on the overall method of rebuilding the wall. The proposal would preserve the setting of the listed building.</p>					

Site Description

The application site is located on the west of Great Russell Street and comprises the British Museum that is a Grade I Listed Building. The application relates specifically to the part of the external retaining wall that is located to the east of East Road. The retaining wall forms part of the rear boundary of the gardens at Nos 1-8 (inclusive) Montague Street. The surrounding street is characterised by specialty retail shops and A3 uses. The site is located within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area.

Relevant History

2006/1974/P and 2006/1975/L

Planning and listed building applications were submitted for the removal and rebuild of external retaining wall along East Road. Planning permission was refused as it was not been demonstrated to the Council's satisfaction that the proposed works to the retaining wall would be undertaken without harming the health and wellbeing of the root system of the adjoining mature trees. Listed building consent was granted for the works as they were not considered to have a harmful impact on the setting of the listed building.

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 Unitary Development Plan 2006

S1 'Strategic policies', SD6 'Amenity for occupiers and neighbours', B3B 'Townscape features', B6 'Listed buildings', B7 'Conservation areas', N8 'Ancient woodlands and trees'.

Assessment

Planning permission is sought for the removal and rebuilding of the East Road retaining wall. There are a number of mature trees along the rear boundaries of the properties on Montague Street that provide screening to these properties and contribute to the character and appearance of the conservation area.

The wall is constructed in yellow stocks in English bond with brick buttresses at approximately 0.5m intervals. It incorporates railings above which are 16mm square section uprights positioned on the diagonal, with small arrowheads. The uprights are supported on a bottom rail which sits on the wall and the bottom rail and base of the uprights have suffered extensive corrosion as a result. The wall itself has suffered damage and is bowing due to supporting the tree roots/soil behind and is temporarily propped with scaffolding in two places. It is proposed to remove the wall in phases and rebuild in facsimile using lime mortar, English bond and salvaged bricks where possible. The wall is strengthened from the rear using concrete buttresses and ties. This would have no effect on the appearance of the wall as the concrete buttresses will be concealed below the soil on the east side

Trees

In the previously refused scheme for these works the applicant had failed to demonstrate that the proposed works would not have an adverse impact on the roots of the tree and was not considered acceptable. The current proposal responds to these concerns as protection measures have been incorporated into the specifications. This includes a Duckbill anchor system that would be used to strengthen the wall. The Landscape Officer has advised that the system minimises root disturbance by driving rods fitted with a self opening anchor through the root area. This is considered an acceptable measure for the protection of adjacent trees and would be supported.

Listed buildings

The proposal would not have a harmful impact on the character and appearance of the listed building and would preserve the setting of the listed building.

Amenity of adjoining residents

The proposed works would not alter the visual appearance of the wall in terms of its height and use of materials. It would not have an adverse impact on the amenity of the adjoining residents and would be considered acceptable.

Conclusion

The proposal would be considered acceptable in terms of its relationship with the adjoining trees and its impact on the character and appearance of the listed building and would be recommended for approval.

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