

<b>Address:</b>	Holbrook House 8-18 Great Queen Street London WC2B 5DG	
<b>Application Number:</b>	2006/3315/P	<b>Officer:</b> Neil McDonald
<b>Ward:</b>	Holborn & Covent Garden	<b>Case File:</b>
<b>Date Received:</b> 18/07/2006 <b>Proposal:</b> Refurbishment and alterations to the property, including ground and first floor extension on Parker Street, extended full width eighth floor and additional floor at ninth level to podium block, replacement plant at roof level, re-cladding of exterior elevations, alterations to main entrance and reception area together with the provision of cycle parking in the basement, landscaping and other associated works. <b>Drawing Numbers:</b> Site Location Plan; Drawings 1590/P00/001; 1590/P00/002 Rev P1; 1590/P00/003 Rev P1; 1590/P00/004 Rev P1; 1590/P00/005 Rev P1; 1590/P00/006 Rev P1; 1590/P00/007 Rev P1; 1590/P00/008 Rev P1; 1590/P00/009 Rev P1; 1590/P00/010 Rev P1; 1590/P00/011 Rev P1; 1590/P00/012 Rev P1; 1590/P00/013 Rev P1; 1590/P00/014 Rev P1; 1590/P00/015 Rev P1; 1590/P00/016 Rev P1; 1590/P00/017 Rev P1; 1590/P00/018 Rev P1; 1590/P00/019 Rev P1; 1590/P00/020 Rev P1; 1590/P00/021 Rev P1; 1590/P00/022 Rev P1; 1590/P00/023 Rev P1; 1590/P00/024 Rev P1; 1590/P00/025 Rev P1; 1590/P01/050 Rev P1; 1590/P01/051 Rev P1; 1590/P01/052 Rev P1; 1590/P01/053 Rev P1; 1590/P01/054 Rev P1; 1590/P01/055 Rev P1; 1590/P01/056 Rev P1; 1590/P01/057 Rev P1; 1590/P01/058 Rev P1; 1590/P01/059 Rev P1; 1590/P01/060 Rev P1; 1590/P01/061 Rev P1; 1590/P01/062 Rev P1; 1590/P01/063 Rev P1; 1590/P01/064 Rev P1; 1590/P01/065 Rev P1; 1590/P01/066 Rev P1; 1590/P01/067 Rev P1; 1590/P01/068 Rev P1; 1590/P01/069 Rev P1; 1590/P01/070 Rev P1; 1590/P01/071 Rev P1; 1590/P01/072 Rev P1; 1590/P01/073 Rev P1; 1590/P01/080; 1590/P03/201; 1590/P03/202; 1590/P03/203; 1590/P03/204; 1590/P03/205; 1590/P03/206; 1590/P03/211; 1590/P03/212; 1590/P03/213; 1590/P03/214; 1590/P03/215; 1590/P03/216; 1590/P03/217; 1590/P03/218; 1590/P03/219. DP9 Planning Statement dated July 2006; WSP Plant Noise Emission Limits dated 11/04/2006; WSP Travel Plan dated 7/07/2006; WSP Transport Statement dated 7/06/2006; Museum of London Archaeology Service Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment dated May 2006; Design And Access Statement dated 13/07/2006.		
<b>RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY: GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION SUBJECT TO A SECTION 106 LEGAL AGREEMENT</b>		
<b>Applicant:</b>	<b>Agent:</b>	

Holbrook House Unit Trust  
c/o Agent

DP9  
Cassini House  
57-59 St.James Street  
London  
SW1A 1LD

## ANALYSIS INFORMATION

Land Use Details:			
	Use Class	Use Description	Floorspace
Existing	<i>B1 Business</i>		<i>11,029.5 m<sup>2</sup></i>
	<i>A4 Drinking Establishments</i>		<i>877 m<sup>2</sup></i>
	Car Park, Service, Plant		<i>2,114.5 m<sup>2</sup></i>
	TOTAL		<i>14,021.4 m<sup>2</sup></i>
Proposed	<i>B1 Business</i>		<i>12,411.0 m<sup>2</sup></i>
	<i>A4 Drinking Establishments</i>		<i>877.0 m<sup>2</sup></i>
	Car Park, Service, Plant		<i>1479.7 m<sup>2</sup></i>
	TOTAL		<i>14,768.1 m<sup>2</sup></i>

Parking Details:		
	Parking Spaces (General)	Parking Spaces (Disabled)
Existing	38	-
Proposed	4	1

## OFFICERS' REPORT

This application is reported to Committee because it entails new non-residential floorspace of more than 450sq.m. [clause 3(ii)] and is subject to a Section 106 legal agreement including contributions for affordable housing in the area [clause 3(vi)].

The application is a 'minor development' as defined by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. The application therefore needs to be determined within 8 weeks from the date of submission which expires on 26<sup>th</sup> September 2006.

### 1. SITE

- 1.1 Holbrook House is an existing, 1960's office development located between Great Queen Street and Parker Street on the eastern edge of the Covent Garden area of Central London. The buildings accommodate approximately 14,000sq.m. of office

(B1) floorspace including car parking, servicing and plant room. There are also two public houses included within the accommodation; 'The George' and 'The Hercules Pillars' both fronting Great Queen Street at opposite ends of the ground floor level. The buildings take the form of a 12-storey tower and 9-storey podium block. From second floor and above, the podium block bridges over Newton Street, a public highway leading northwards from Great Queen Street and intersecting Parker Street. On the north side of the podium block fronting Parker Street is a surface car-park (9-spaces) accessed from Newton Street. Further along Parker Street to the west is the entrance to a service area and 36-space car-park contained within the basement of the building.

- 1.2 The surrounding area is mixed in character and use ranging from large scale commercial and institutional uses in grand buildings to small scale pubs, restaurants and private dwellings. The most notable structure in the vicinity is the Grade II\* listed Freemasons Hall on the south side of Great Queen Street to the south of the site.
- 1.3 The site is located within the Seven Dials Conservation Area for which a CA statement was adopted in 2000. Holbrook House is mentioned in the Statement as being a negative feature in the conservation area due to it being out of scale and character.

## **2. THE PROPOSAL**

- 2.1 The proposals involve the refurbishment of the existing office buildings together with extensions for new commercial floorspace at ground and first floor level over the existing car-park fronting Parker Street and at eighth and ninth floor levels to the podium block. The total external gain in floorspace would be 747sq.m. although the increase in useable office space would be greater (i.e. 1,382sq.m.). This is due to internal reorganisation increasing office space and plant areas at the expense of car parking.
- 2.2 The applicant states the rationale for the proposals as being to provide up to date accommodation for new and existing tenants and secure a higher profile for the building. An existing office tenant, John Charcol Financial Advisors has expressed a need for additional accommodation and a two-level extension adjacent to the podium building is designed for their purposes.
- 2.3 The external works would entail the following:
  - New 2-storey office extension to the podium building, to occupy the current site of the Parker Street car park
  - Build-out of recessed existing eighth-floor to be flush with main facades of podium block and addition of a new recessed ninth floor for offices and plant in place of existing roof mounted air-condition plant
  - Removal of existing 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> floor plant room, external plant and lift motor room at top of tower to be replaced with new purpose-built enclosures

- Elevational changes entailing re-cladding with double-glazed window panels. The tower will be re-clad with full height windows to emphasise its vertical nature, while a more horizontal treatment to the podium would be attained by increasing the window sizes by reducing the Portland stone clad window surrounds and pilasters
- Remodelled main entrance from Great Queen Street including removal of steps for level access, new glass circular sliding doors and black polished marble surround
- Public realm improvements to Newton Street where it underpasses the building, including traffic calming measures, hard landscaping, public art and lighting
- Hard and soft landscaping enhancements to Great Queen Street forecourt and other areas

2.4 The two existing public houses would be retained within the scheme with refurbished frontage to Hercules Pillars. A replacement service courtyard and refuse storage area would be provided for The George, which is currently serviced from the Parker Street car park. This would be accessed from the side and rear of the new extension over this car park. The current office loading bay access on Parker Street would also be retained although the basement car parking would be reduced from 36 spaces to 5 spaces, together with the addition of 44 cycle parking spaces, showers and changing facilities.

### **3. RELEVANT HISTORY**

3.1 Various minor works and improvements have been granted over recent years including the following:-

- Erection of new entrance canopy to replace existing. Infill fireman's balconies from 1st to 11th floors. Installation of additional air conditioning plant on the fourth and eighth floor roofs. Granted 19/10/1990, Ref. 9000193.
- Installation of railings to a height of 2 metres and a gate around the rear area. Granted 12/11/2002, ref. PSX0205131.
- Installation of new railings and gate to a height of 2.4m, around rear car park. Granted 22/07/2004, ref. 2004/0793/P.

### **4. CONSULTATIONS**

#### **Statutory Consultees**

4.1 English Heritage (GLAAS) – An archaeological evaluation should be undertaken prior to development in the form of archaeological trial pits within the application area. The archaeological evaluation and subsequent mitigation strategy should be secured by a condition of any planning consent granted. The results of the

evaluation should be used to confirm the archaeological strategy necessary to mitigate the impact of the development of which EH will advise when received.

### **Conservation Area Advisory Committee**

- 4.2 Bloomsbury CAAC – Object to the additional height as the building is already too big and there is no basis for any further increase. The CAAC also disliked the proposed re-cladding which has less texture –save for the highly fashionable “random bits”.

### **Local Groups**

- 4.3 Covent Garden Community Association – No comments received.

### **4.4 Adjoining Occupiers**

	<b>Original</b>
<i>Number of Letters Sent</i>	<b>70</b>
<i>Number of responses Received</i>	<b>00</b>
<i>Number in Support</i>	<b>00</b>
<i>Number of Objections</i>	<b>01</b>

- 4.5 Consultation was carried out with occupiers of surrounding premises and a site notice displayed. The objection received was from the first floor flat in the end of terrace building which flanks onto the currently open car park and service yard on Parker Street. The issues related to:

- Proposed 2-storey extension on Parker Street would block daylight to the flat’s bathroom, bedroom and common stairwell;
- Would create an alley running between the flat block and the extension adding to the already prevalent problems from drug users and dealers.

## **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 –adopted June 2006**

- 5.2 S1-S3 – Strategic policies, sustainable development (*complies*)  
S9 – Transport (*complies*)  
S14 – Retaining existing business sites (*complies*)  
SD1 – Quality of life (*complies*)  
SD2 – Planning obligations (*complies*)

SD3 – Mixed use development (*complies*)  
SD5 – Density of development (*complies*)  
SD6 – Amenity for occupiers and neighbours (*complies*)  
SD8 – Disturbance from plant and machinery (*complies*)  
SD9 – Resources and energy (*complies*)  
SD10B – Contaminated land (*complies*)  
B1 – General Design Principles (*complies*)  
B3 – Alterations and extensions (*complies*)  
B7 – Conservation Areas (*complies*)  
B8 – Archaeology (*complies*)  
N3B – Metropolitan walks and green corridors (*complies*)  
N4 – Providing public open space (*complies*)  
N5 – Biodiversity (*complies*)  
T1 – Sustainable transport (*complies*)  
T2 – Capacity of transport provision (*complies*)  
T3 – Pedestrians and cycling (*complies*)  
T7 – Off-street parking (*complies*)  
T12 – Works affecting highways (*complies*)  
T16 – Movement of goods (*complies*)  
E1 – Location of business uses (*complies*)

### **Supplementary Planning Guidance**

- 5.3 SPG 2002:- 1.3 Sustainable development, 3.2 Community safety, 3.9 Planning contributions, 5.7 Highways, needs of pedestrians and access.
- 5.4 Seven Dials Conservation Area Statement approved 2000.
- 5.5 SPG -Affordable Housing and Housing in Mixed Use Development, approved June 2005.

### **Strategic and Government Policy**

- 5.6 London Plan

## **6. ASSESSMENT**

- 6.1 The main issues raised by this proposal are considered to be:
  - The principle of the proposed office extension having regard to relevant land use policies including those promoting mixed use
  - The Council's policies on sustainable building practices as they relate to the proposed development
  - Whether the proposals, including the changes to the elevations satisfy the relevant test of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of the conservation area
  - The impact of the development on the amenities of the area including the effect on the light and outlook of adjoining occupiers
  - Transport and access related matters.

### **Land use policy issues**

*Principle of office expansion*

- 6.2 Policy E1 states that the Council will grant planning permission for office development in locations accessible by a choice of means of transport. Policy SD5 states that development that significantly increases travel demand should firstly be located within the King's Cross Opportunity Area, Central London Area and Town Centres. This proposal involving an additional 746.7sqm is not likely to generate a significant amount of additional people movements. Despite this, the site is located within the Central London Area and is within walking distance of public transport and the cycle network and as such it is considered appropriate for employment expansion.

*Mixed use policy*

- 6.3 Policy SD3 which promotes mixed use, seeks a contribution to the supply of housing from developments in Central London when more than 200sq.m. gross of new non-residential floorspace is proposed. The Council will seek to negotiate up to 50% of the additional gross floorspace as housing if appropriate. For the purposes of this policy, Para 1.26 states that the residential accommodation should be independent of other uses and separately accessed at street level. Para 1.29 provides circumstances where a mix of uses may not be appropriate. These include:

- where a floorspace increase is required to accommodate an existing user
- where housing is not compatible with the primary use
- where a secondary use cannot be satisfactorily accommodated by the site or buildings owing to their scale, limited access to street frontage, or heritage considerations

- 6.4 The current scheme proposes 746.7 sqm of additional Class B1 floorspace. As the site is within the Central London Area up to 50% of this floorspace should be residential, i.e. 373.35sqm. This floor area could accommodate approximately four dwellings.

- 6.5 However, the applicant has submitted a justification for not providing the residential accommodation on-site. This looks at 3 alternative options:

- 6.6 *Option 1 –locating the residential in the ground and first floor extensions on Parker Street.* The extension over the ground and first floors facing Parker Street would provide approximately 400sqm of floorspace. It could have separate access from Parker Street, but may have limited amenity (poor access to light) due to the height of the surrounding buildings. The applicant does not clearly explain why the existing occupier does not want to occupy the floors above. However, if the extension would not proceed except to accommodate the existing occupier, this would be an acceptable justification not to accommodate the negotiated residential floorspace in this location. It is noted that the ground and first floors would work best as a single unit as there is no access to this area from the main service core, which is located within the south-western building (no.16).

- 6.7 *Option 2 - Location of residential floorspace within the ninth floor extension.* The extension at 9<sup>th</sup> floor level would result in approx 130sqm of additional floorspace. This space is adjacent to the plant equipment and could only be accessed by lift

from no.16. In this regard it could not provide separate residential access and is not considered ideal residential floorspace, being adjacent to the plant room.

- 6.8 *Option 3 - Converting the north-western portion of the first and second floors of the building:* This was dismissed due to the difficulties in moving the generator, which is a building control requirement, to provide separate access to the residential floorspace. It is unclear why the stair at the corner of Parker and Newton Streets which leads to the basement cannot be extended to the first and second floors. Once again the appropriateness of this area would need to be assessed in terms of residential amenity.
- 6.9 The applicant does not address the issue of locating the residential floorspace elsewhere on the site, such as on the top floors of no. 16. However, once again this may not be practical due to no separate access and the requirement to share the lifts. Given the constraints of the existing building, in this instance it would appear difficult to locate residential floorspace on-site.
- 6.10 Para 1.31 of policy SD3 states that where a satisfactory mix of uses cannot be secured on-site, the Council may seek a planning obligation for off-site provision of affordable housing. In this case the off-site provision should be equal to the on-site gain in floorspace (i.e. 746.7sqm) to address the overall 50% requirement. In anticipation of this, the applicant has submitted a statement with some evidence of searching for a suitable property to provide residential accommodation. Whilst it does seem difficult to believe that there are no suitable sites to provide residential accommodation within Central London, it would be difficult to dispute that there were no properties of the particular size and type required for this relatively small amount of residential space at the time of search.
- 6.11 Para 1.31 also states that exceptionally, a financial contribution may be accepted in lieu of off-site provision. This will relate to the value of the land or airspace needed to provide the secondary use elsewhere.
- 6.12 The applicant has provided an assessment based on the 'GLA Toolkit' for financial viability assessment model. The proposed contribution is based on the potential profit from four units of off-site market housing in an office conversion. This assessment bears no relationship to the cost to the Council of securing housing on an alternative site, and no relationship to the amount that the development is able to fund on the basis of the proposed development –consequently, it does not comply with June 2005 SPG on affordable housing and housing in mixed-use development (para 3.3.51). This states "Financial appraisal may include the cost of providing housing on an alternative site, existing use values, alternative development values, development costs and sales values."
- 6.13 Past experience of securing housing on alternative sites suggests that the sum required to cover the costs of provision are generally far in excess of anything that could be justified by the profit from a comparable sized development. At draft SPG stage (Nov 2003), a figure of £118,470 was calculated as the cost of a 75 sq m dwelling (not including the building costs that could be funded by capitalised rents and Housing Corporation funds). On that basis, to provide 746.7 sq m of residential space would cost in the order of £1.185 million.



- 6.14 Whilst the applicant notes the relatively high value of offices in this location, it is still the case that residential values are high also. Generally office values and residential values are not very different, and little is likely to be achieved by calculating the additional profit achieved from a "compliant" development (with on-site housing) versus the non-compliant proposal. Consequently, the most appropriate para 3.3.51 considerations are likely to be the existing (use) value of the site, the development cost, and the sales value (or capitalised rental value) of the completed scheme –in effect, a residual valuation of the proposal. In calculating the funds that are potentially available to make the scheme worthwhile as a market project and to fund S106 requirements, the Council generally takes into account a "normal" developer profit of 15% on the value of the completed scheme. The residual may be offered as a financial contribution.
- 6.15 At the time of writing this report the applicant's final calculations in this regard have not been supplied however, an offer of £250,000, to reflect the notional proportion of additional land value gained by the non-inclusion of residential use on site has been offered. This is still the subject of negotiations between the applicant and officers and the final agreed figure, if acceptable will be secured under a S.106 agreement.
- Provision of public open space*
- 6.16 Policy N4 states that to ensure public open space deficiency is not made worse, the Council will only grant planning permission for development that is likely to lead to an increased use of public open space where an appropriate contribution to the supply of public open space is made. Other developments will be encouraged to contribute to the supply of open space.
- 6.17 The proposal would result in an increase in office floorspace which is below the threshold of 1,000sqm stated in the supporting text to Policy N4 for a contribution to normally be required. However, the proposed extensions could still reasonably be expected to lead to increased pressure on public open space in the area. It is to be noted that the application includes proposed enhancements to the forecourt area of the site. If designed as a welcoming semi-public area with perhaps seating around the planter, this space could be considered an acceptable contribution towards the provision of public open space. Details of such seating should be sought as a condition to any approval granted.
- Biodiversity*
- 6.18 Policy N5 expects development schemes to have considered conserving and enhancing biodiversity, including by creating wildlife habitats. The provision of vegetation to the front of the site would be welcome. There are also opportunities as part of the roof level plant room additions to incorporate green or brown roofs. This should be investigated and details submitted as a condition to any approval granted.
- 6.19 Subject to the above recommended conditions and the securing of the suggested contribution for affordable housing under S106, the scheme is considered to meet relevant land use policy requirements.

## **Sustainability**

- 6.20 Policy SD9C seeks developments to conserve energy and resources through: design, renewable energy use, optimising energy supply and the use of recycled and renewable building materials. In addition Policy B1 encourages sustainable design by promoting energy efficiency and efficient use of resources for all developments.
- 6.21 The applicant has provided a statement on Sustainability and Energy Conservation as part of the Design and Access Statement. This states that the proposed works will achieve a 'Very Good' rating under BREEAM. An accompanying preliminary BREEAM assessment indicates the proposal would achieve a rating of 'Good', but goes on to advise of which credits could be obtained to receive a rating of 'very good'. The applicant has confirmed to officers their intention of achieving BREEAM 'very good' and would accept a condition to secure this objective in the event of the application being approved.
- 6.22 SD9B (Water) states that the Council will only grant permission for development that it considers is sited and designed in a manner that does not cause harm to the water environment, water quality or drainage systems and prevents or mitigates flooding. The Council will require developers to include measures to conserve water and where appropriate incorporate Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS).
- 6.23 The applicant refers to water conserving fittings to be installed within the building and to enable tenants to monitor their water use. A major leak detection system will also be installed. The BREEAM pre-assessment indicates that 3 out of the 6 credits available in Water will be achieved by the development which is sufficient to comply with the draft SPD guidelines. Additional surface water runoff arising directly from the additional floorspace would be limited and the applicant has not specifically addressed SUDS measures. However, improvements to the existing building such as providing water storage tanks for re-use of the water on-site, or delaying the release of water from the site could count towards achieving the enhanced BREEAM rating. The inclusion of brown or green roofs as raised under the 'biodiversity' heading above would also improve rainwater retention.

### **Conservation and Urban Design Issues**

- 6.24 Given the building's existing low contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area, it is considered that a number of significant opportunities exist as a result of these refurbishment proposals, to improve both the building and the local environment around the site. The various aspects of the proposals are assessed in turn having regard to Replacement UDP 2006 policies B1 – General Design Principles (includes community safety), B3 – Alterations and extensions, B7 – Conservation Areas and N3B – Metropolitan walks and green corridors.

#### *Main Entrance*

- 6.25 Currently, the main entrance to Holbrook House forms a weak base to the building in both architectural and streetscape terms. It is therefore proposed to convert the existing office suite at ground floor level into the main entrance hall and the existing entrance hall into a new elongated lift lobby. Externally, a new plinth will be formed to the base of the building strengthening the connection between the tower and the pavement by introducing black polished marble clad elevations that extend from the

Hercules Public House into Newton Street, whilst also creating level access from Great Queen Street so the building complies with the Disability Discrimination Act requirements. The internal space on the corner of Newton Street and Great Queen Street will become a 'break out' space with a seating area adjacent to the lift lobby.

#### *Parker Street Extension*

- 6.26 The existing car park addressing the Parker Street frontage is a somewhat 'leaky' space. The new extension has been designed as an integral part of the refurbished building and will be clad in Portland Stone, with anodised aluminium panels, neutral solar control glass featuring coloured glazing strips and using a random light/mid grey, black and red palette. It is therefore considered that the proposed two storey building on this part of the site will appropriately reinstate the street edge and provide a degree of transparency, in turn encouraging the activation of this edge.

#### *Roof Extension*

- 6.27 It is proposed to remove the existing unsightly plant on the roof of the 8<sup>th</sup> floor of the podium block and create a new floor at level 9. This roof extension will incorporate a new plant area. It is proposed that this new 'sky storey' will be setback from the existing 8<sup>th</sup> floor to reduce its impact, defining the profile of the building by improving its overall roofscape. The 9<sup>th</sup> floor will be clad in neutral solar control glass with aluminium parapet panels and a transparent glass balustrade. 'Slide open' window frames will allow occupants access to use the 9<sup>th</sup> floor terrace.

#### *Elevations*

- 6.28 The existing architecture of the building is defined by a regular and modular structural and planning grid, including the juxtaposition of the vertical elements of the tower with the horizontal elements of the podium and west wings. The proposals seek to reinforce this juxtaposition by creating a new, layered facade and by the introduction of projecting window bays and subtle colour within the facades. The expressed use of grid and tonal colour addresses a number of key objectives of the proposed architectural design; namely- rebranding of the entire building by giving it a new identity, contrasting the verticality of the tower with the horizontality of the podium and 'wings' and providing a contrast against the background neutrality of the existing Portland stone facade.
- 6.29 The proposals treat the Portland Stone facades as a background for the insertion of new vertical windows and window bays into the tower and for random strips of colour to be incorporated in the podium and west wings. Individual panels will be highlighted in subtle accent colours of red, black, mid grey and light grey, against the neutral underlying palette of white stone, natural anodised window frames and neutral tinted solar control glass. The random pattern that emerges has evolved to articulate the facades, to add interest, whilst also reinforcing the abstract modernist theme of the original 1960s architecture.

#### *Streetscape and public realm*

- 6.30 Great Queen Street is designated in the Replacement UDP as a 'Metropolitan Walk' meaning that any proposals should not harm its character, and more positively, enhance the value of the area. In general the proposals are considered to achieve an improvement to the public realm with the changes to the ground floor elevations and the new extension activating, and providing visual interest, giving enhanced legibility to the streetscape.

- 6.31 The proposed hard and soft landscaping; repaved surfaces in York stone or similar, and new planter incorporating tree up lighters in front of the existing John Charcol tenancy and The George Public House, will complement the role played by the improved elevation treatments and better delineate the adjacent spaces as semi private/public areas which will in turn be better utilised, as a result of such improvements.
- 6.32 The proposed improvements to Newton Street are welcomed in principle, including a level crossing point at the juncture with Great Queen Street. The proposed glazing, lighting and public art installations will assist in activating these street edges (compared with the existing situation), providing visual interest and encouraging a more pleasant and secure pedestrian experience along this valued through route. The detail of the public art has not been provided at this stage, but can be made the subject of a condition.

*Approvals of details and materials*

- 6.33 It will be necessary to condition the proposed materials of the scheme, to ensure the highest possible quality. This would include all external facing materials, hard and soft landscaping and boundary treatments.
- 6.34 On the basis of the above, it is considered that the proposal is acceptable in townscape terms being of at least equal benefit to the character and appearance of the conservation area compared with the building as existing.

**Amenity issues**

- 6.35 Policy SD6 requires development proposals to have regard to the amenities of existing occupiers. In that regard, there are existing flats on the upper floors of 58 Parker Street which have flank windows overlooking the current open car park. This will be developed to 2-storeys height by way of the proposed extension. Consequently there will be a degree of additional enclosure affecting the first floor residential accommodation within 58 Parker Street.
- 6.36 The flank windows are small and narrow and do not provide the sole source of natural light to any habitable rooms. The bedroom of the affected flat also has a window facing out from the rear elevation as well as the flank window which is angled towards the existing escape stairwell to Holbrook House. This stairwell will be retained, along with a 2-2.5 metre wide passageway between the extension and the boundary with No. 58 for servicing The George public house. Considering the flank wall of No. 58 is itself set back at least 1m from the boundary at upper floor levels, the potential loss of light and outlook to the first floor bedroom is not considered to be significant, especially considering the dense urban context in which this flat is situated.
- 6.37 Also to be taken into account is the community safety improvements that would be secured by the proposals. As well as the improved streetscape in the vicinity of the Newton Street underpass the proposal would conclude the history of antisocial behaviour practiced in the current Parker Street carpark. The service alleyway for the public house would be securely gated and subject to less comings and goings than the existing car park and therefore should afford little opportunity for the problems in this regard to continue.

#### *Noise from plant*

- 6.38 A plant enclosure is to be located at 13<sup>th</sup> floor level together with smaller plant areas within the floor plates at 12<sup>th</sup> floor level and the new 9<sup>th</sup> floor to the podium. This is to enable the removal and replacement of all the existing uncovered roof mounted plant which exists at present. Further new plant will also be located in the basement.
- 6.39 A background noise survey report and recommended noise limits have been prepared by WSP environmental consultants and submitted with the application. These take account of all surrounding noise sensitive residential windows, including the Kingsway Hotel. A further accompanying report undertakes a review of the refurbishment proposals with particular regard to the acoustic performance of the amended floor slab. Based on the findings of these reports it is considered likely that the new plant in the 13<sup>th</sup> floor plant room can be kept within the Council's usual noise criteria so as not to cause a noise nuisance to neighbours. However, this should be ensured by attaching a condition requiring details of the type of plant to be installed and its acoustic properties.

#### **Transport and access**

- 6.40 The proposed extensions are not of a scale such as would be likely to have implications on the existing capacity of transport provision in the area.
- 6.41 In accordance with policy T1C (sustainable transport –travel plans) a Business Travel Plan has been submitted to help promote green travel alternatives for the additional trips generated. However, this does not fully meet the requirements of T1C as further work needs to be undertaken to ensure that employees and visitors to the site are provided with a the necessary information on public transport, walking and cycling routes in the vicinity and to address servicing. Measurable targets will also need to be agreed for inclusion in the Plan prior to signing of any S106 agreement.
- 6.42 The need for secure cycle parking in accordance with the Council's Parking Standards has more than been satisfied with the inclusion of 44 secure spaces in the basement together with showers (UDP Appendix 6 standards would require a minimum of 5 for the additional floorspace proposed). A condition should be placed on any permission requiring the provision/retention of these in ongoing compliance with policy T3.
- 6.43 Car parking standards in Appendix 6 have been set to encourage development to manage travel demands by means other than the private car, and to meet the needs of people with disabilities. Appendix 6 therefore contains maximum standards other than for cycles, disabled parking and servicing.
- 6.44 Noting the above, the proposal to decrease on-site parking from 45 to 5 spaces, including the provision of 1 for disabled persons meets with the standards and policy T7. The disabled space should be appropriately signed and linemarked, to prevent use by other motorists and its retention secured by condition.
- 6.45 Under T12, the highway-related public realm improvements and access arrangements must not impede highway safety. The basement service yard and its

access is not proposed to be changed in any way likely to have a detrimental effect on public safety. With regard to the works shown for the carriageway on Newton Street, the submitted plans provide details of two raised entry treatments. These would facilitate improved pedestrian access to the site. However, the granite sets also shown on the submitted plans would be inconsistent with the Council's Streetscape Design Guide. The sets would be of limited benefit to pedestrians and would create a long term maintenance issue. Officers consider there is a far greater need for other alternative measures in the near vicinity of the site which are necessary to ensure suitable pedestrian connectivity to the surrounding area, particularly Holborn Underground Station. Namely;

- Raising the lay-by on Parker Street opposite the site and resurfacing with granite setts (the lay-by severs the footway in its current location); and
- Widening the footway between the loading bay and the junction of Parker Street and Kingsway. The carriageway width is much wider than required at this point and the footway can be widened whilst still providing sufficient carriageway width.

- 6.46 All work to be undertaken within the highway reservation will need to be agreed with the Council's Highways Management officers and made the subject of a Section 106 Agreement. The plan to be submitted as a requirement of such an agreement would supersede anything indicated for the highway on the application drawings. The Council will undertake the agreed works at the cost of the developer and the sum required would form part of the Agreement upon signing. There is no objection to the re-paving proposed around the perimeter of the site.
- 6.47 The construction of the proposal has the potential to adversely impact on the flow of traffic and the safety of pedestrians and cyclists using the highway. A Construction Management Plan agreed with Camden's Highway Management Team should be in place in order to negate the impact of any construction vehicles and road/lane closures that may be necessary to allow for the works to occur. Details of appropriate Construction Management Plan should be submitted for prior approval as a condition to any permission granted.
- 6.48 The arrangements for refuse collection and general servicing of the site will remain unchanged as will the size of the loading bay and refuse storage area. The increase in office space is expected to generate no more than 2 additional servicing trips a day which is considered to be within the existing servicing capacity. The applicant has indicated that a Servicing Management Plan will be implemented to ensure the efficient use of this area. This should be submitted for prior approval as a condition to any permission granted.
- 6.49 Subject to the above mentioned conditions and S106 provisions, it is considered that the proposals are acceptable in transport terms.

### **Other Issues**

- 6.50 There is a history of previous industrial uses on the site which may have lead to contamination. As such, a site investigation should be undertaken prior to development and a report including any recommendations for remediation submitted. Any required remediation must be agreed with the Council prior to the

commencement of any works. An appropriate condition should be attached to secure this.

## **7. CONCLUSION**

- 7.1 The proposed refurbishment of this existing building together with an appropriate financial contribution for housing, will secure the continuation of the building and its current uses in a sustainable manner that accords with relevant Council policies. Furthermore, the external alterations to this building which, in its current state has been identified as making a negative contribution to the surrounding conservation area, will at least preserve the area's existing character and appearance. The public realm improvements in the vicinity of the Newton Street underpass will be of benefit to the amenity of the area generally. The proposed extensions at ground/first floor and the additional floor to the podium are also considered capable of assimilation into the existing townscape without adversely affecting their surroundings or views of or over the site.
- 7.2 Therefore, subject to conditions and a S106 legal agreement as outlined below, it is recommended that planning permission for the proposed works be granted.

## **8. LEGAL COMMENTS**

- 8.1 Members are referred to the note from the Legal Division at the start of the Agenda.

### **SECTION 106 HEADS OF TERMS**

- 8.2 A legal agreement should be attached to any permission granted covering the following items:
- Contributions for highways works including crossover creation/reinstatement, upgraded and reconstructed frontage footways, raised speed tables/crossings to Newton Street and widening the footway on Parker Street;
  - Travel plan;
  - Financial contribution towards affordable housing in the area.

9. **RECOMMENDATION 1: Grant planning permission with conditions and subject to a S106 legal agreement as summarised above.**

10. **RECOMMENDATION 2: That in the event of the S106 referred to in Recommendation 1 has not been completed within 8 weeks of the date of complete submission of the application, the Head of Development Control be authorised to refuse the application for the following reasons:**

- ***The proposed development, in the absence of a legal agreement securing necessary highway works, would fail to secure adequate provision for and safety of pedestrians and cyclists contrary to policies***

***T3 (Pedestrians and cycling) and T12 (Works affecting highways) of the Camden Replacement Unitary Development Plan 2006.***

- ***The proposed development, in the absence of a legal agreement securing a travel plan, would be likely to give rise to significantly increased car-borne trips contributing to parking and traffic congestion in the immediate area contrary to T1C (Travel plans) and T2 (Capacity of transport provision) of the Camden Replacement Unitary Development Plan 2006.***
- ***The proposed development, in the absence of a legal agreement to secure an appropriate contribution towards affordable housing in the area, would fail to ensure the provision of the required amount of residential floorspace for the scheme to accord with the objectives of policy SD3 (Mixed use development) of the Camden Replacement Unitary Development Plan 2006.***

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