



Department of the Environment and
Department of Transport

Common Services

Room 1417 Tollgate House Houlton Street Bristol BS2 9DJ

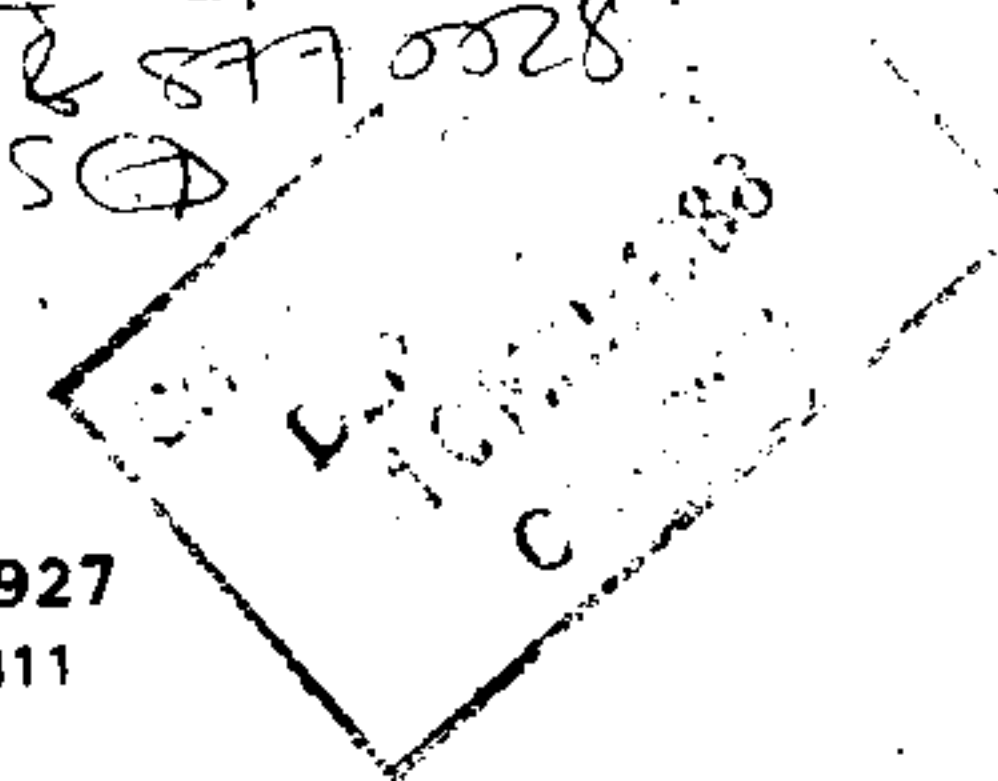
Telex 449321

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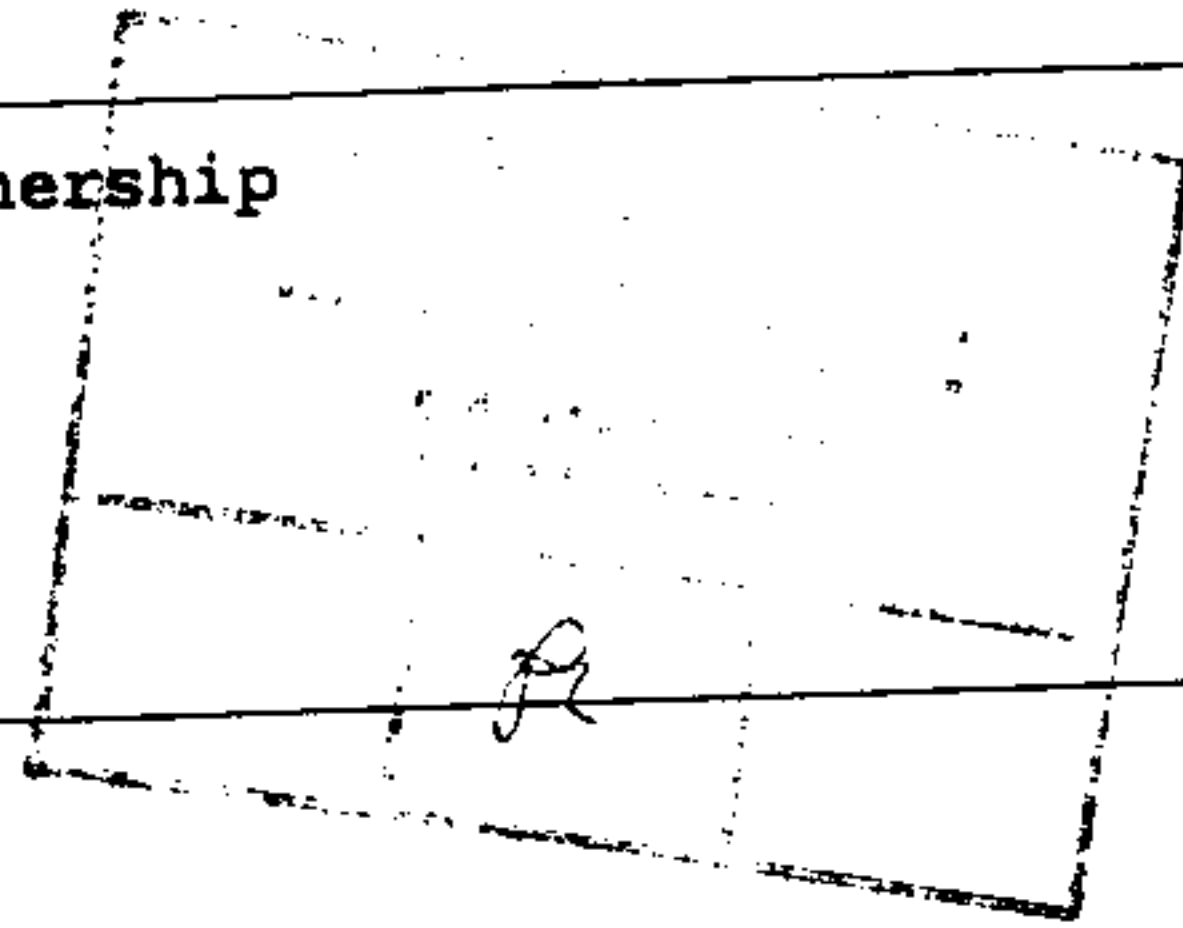
Switchboard 0272-218811

GTN 2074

Reg: 2119 & 2120
8702264 & 8770028
BOTH DISMISSED
N15/18/D



Carpenter Farrer Partnership
37 Portland Road
HOVE
East Sussex
BN3 5DQ



Your reference

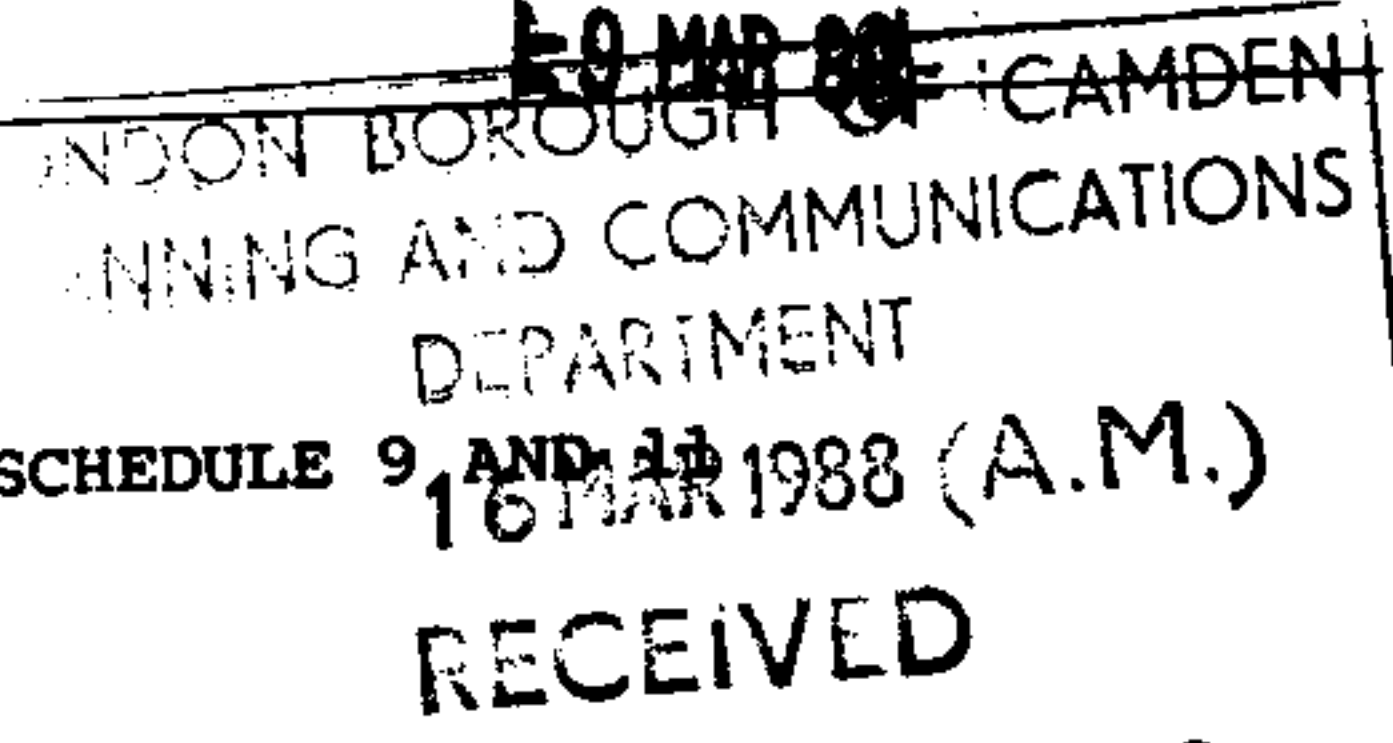
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Our reference T/APP/X5210/A/87/77293/24
E/87/802637/P4

Date

Gentlemen

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1971, SECTION 36 AND SCHEDULE 9 AND 10
APPEALS BY ALBANY LIFE INSURANCE CO LTD
APPLICATION NOS: PL/8602264 CASE FILE NO: N15/18/D
HB/8770028 CASE FILE NO: N15/18/D



1. As you know I have been appointed by the Secretary of State for the Environment to determine the above mentioned appeals. These appeals are against the decisions of the London Borough of Camden Council to refuse planning permission and listed building consent for the erection of office accommodation at fourth floor/roof level at 3-5 Bedford Row, London, WCLR 4DB. I have considered the written representations made by you and by the council and also those made by interested persons. I inspected the site on Tuesday 19 January 1988.
2. From the representations made I consider the main issue in this case is whether the proposed extension at roof level would be likely to have a harmful effect on the appearance of the building and therefore on the street scene.
3. Camden Council oppose the extension both on the ground of appearance and because it would be contrary to their office restraint policy. In addition the use as an accountants office does not meet their criteria for office extensions in the locality, which limits development to the use of the legal and closely associated professions. You consider the strong links between your clients and solicitors offices in the vicinity, and the long established nature of the business, would qualify this scheme for approval.
4. Although I appreciate that the aim of the Council is to preserve the character of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area I do not consider that the difference between the 2 professions would be apparent from the exterior of the premises. Moreover the links between the 2 appears to me to be sufficiently strong in this case to allow similar consideration. Nevertheless the acceptability of the proposal depends on its effect on the appearance of the building.
5. From my inspection I note that 3-5 Bedford Row is part of an early Georgian terrace on the east side of the street, close to the junction with Sandland Street. The terrace is uniform in height at 4 storeys above ground level, consistent in appearance and particularly pleasing in proportion to the width of the street. The block was evidently rebuilt in external facsimile in 1964 re-using the 3 original doorways, but lacking chimney stacks. There are no roof extensions at the southern end of the street, but there is one at the northern end which in my view does detract from the appearance of the building. Evidently one reason for allowing this mansard was that it was on a new building and that it screened an obtrusive lift tower and tank room.

6. Your client's proposal is to build an additional storey with a mansard profile which would be well set back from the front parapet. Your drawing indicates that the additional storey would only just be visible at 1.5 m high from the back of the opposite pavement. Evidently the design was modified to meet the comments of English Heritage.
7. English Heritage however oppose the scheme despite the modification on the basis that it would be visible from the surrounding streets and would set a precedent for similar extensions on buildings incapable of taking the additional load without modifications to their structure. Structural alterations of this type might be damaging to the fabric and character of the original buildings in Bedford Row.
8. Although little of the roof might be seen from directly opposite Nos 3-5 it would be seen from longer views in Bedford Row, from the upper storeys of facing buildings and from Sandland Street.
9. Because of the uniform height and appearance of the buildings any change to the east side of the street would, in my opinion, be very noticeable and I consider that this proposal would be a disruptive element on the building and in the street scene.
10. I appreciate your clients wish to extend their premises in order to assist their tenants to improve their service, nevertheless in my view this proposal would be harmful for the character of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area.
11. I have taken into account all the other issues that have been raised but these have not proved sufficient to outweigh the considerations that have led to my decision.
12. For the above reasons, and in exercise of the powers transferred to me I hereby dismiss these appeals.

I am Gentlemen
Your obedient Servant

Ann R Bridger

ANN R BRIDGER BA(Hons) Arch DipUD MA RIBA MRTPI
Inspector