

**Date:** 31/05/2013  
**Our Ref:** 2013/2458/PRE  
**Contact:** Jonathan Markwell  
**Direct Line:** 020 7974 2453  
**Email:** [Jonathan.Markwell@camden.gov.uk](mailto:Jonathan.Markwell@camden.gov.uk)



**Development Management  
Planning Services**  
London Borough of Camden  
Town Hall  
Argyle Street  
London WC1H 8ND

Tel 020 7974 4444  
Fax 020 7974 1975  
[planning@camden.gov.uk](mailto:planning@camden.gov.uk)  
[www.camden.gov.uk/planning](http://www.camden.gov.uk/planning)

Sophie Chapman  
Associate  
Savills (L & P) Ltd  
Lansdowne House  
57 Berkeley Square  
London  
W1J 6ER

Dear Sophie Chapman

Planning Pre-application advice note  
Reference: 2013/2458/PRE

Planning enquiry regarding: St George's Court, 2-12 Bloomsbury Way and  
2-28 New Oxford Street, London, WC1A 2SH

*Pre application advice/meeting on amendments to planning permission 2012/1400/P*

I refer to our pre-application meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2013 about the above  
proposal, held at the Council offices.

Those in attendance

LB Camden officers:  
Jonathan Markwell (Senior Planning Officer – Development Management)  
Charles Rose (Heritage and Conservation Officer)  
Steve Cardno (Senior Transport Planner).

On behalf of the applicant:  
Sophie Chapman (Savills)  
Ben Jones (Buckley Gray Yeoman)  
Geoff Springer (L&R Properties)

Context & Proposals

Planning permission (2012/1400/P) was granted following the completion of a S106  
Legal Agreement on 01/02/2013 for various works to St George's Court, most  
substantially the provision of a roof extension change of use of the ground floor to  
flexible Class A1/A3 use and the refurbishment of the offices as a whole.

This permission is presently being implemented but a number of amendments are  
now sought following design development. These are detailed within the Buckley  
Gray Yeoman document (dated April 2013) produced for the purposes of this pre-  
application discussion. Subsequent to this, and prior to the pre-application meeting, it  
was confirmed that the applicant no longer wished for the Council to consider the  
possible change from Class A1/A3 to Class A1/A3/B1 at ground floor level.

The matters discussed at the meeting related to land use, design, amenity, transport and procedural considerations. As such, these matters form the basis of this advice note.

### Land use

The proposals seek to reduce the size of the approved ancillary Class B1 café and instead provide a fourth separate flexible retail / restaurant unit (Class A1/A3) fronting onto Bloomsbury Way.

It is considered that the principle of providing further Class A1/A3 floorspace is appropriate. At application stage it is considered that commentary is provided to justify such a change, with the same rationale as that put forward and referenced in the committee report to 2012/1400/P likely to suffice.

It is noted that there is inconsistency between the plans submitted and separate commentary in terms of the floorspace of this unit and the impact this would have on the total Class A1/A3 floorspace (more specifically whether this would be above or below 1000sqm) at the site.

It is also specified that the current proposal is similar in nature to that originally submitted during the course of application 2012/1400/P, but was subsequently chosen to be omitted by you during the course of the application. Such a change resulted in the amount of Class A1/A3 floorspace being below 1000sqm, whereas had it remained above 1000sqm officers would have sought to secure small (below 100sqm) units and for these to be offered at affordable rents (policy DP10) and a financial contribution towards community facilities (see policies CS10, DP15 and CPG8 Ch4). With this in mind you are advised that should it subsequently be shown that the proposals result in an increase in Class A1/A3 accommodation of over 1000sqm at the site then officers will seek to secure such measures, with a s106 legal agreement required for such matters.

### Design

No design issues are raised in respect of the proposed ground floor changes, which individually and cumulatively are considered to be appropriate both in terms of the building and wider conservation area.

Turning to consider the proposed roof top plant and plant enclosure, this element of the proposals is currently of concern, given the context of the previous application (whereby part of the justification accepted for the proposed roof extension was that it would result in replacing redundant/relocated plant), the general thrust of policy which seeks for plant to be located internally rather than externally and, moreover, the potential visual impact. It is recommended that this element of the proposals is considered further, with steps taken to ensure (and this to be demonstrated in any application) that there is no scope to locate it elsewhere (for example at basement floor level) prior advancing proposals at roof level. Should it subsequently be proposed to locate an enclosure at roof level this is advised to be set within the centre of the roof to avoid it being visible from the street, thereby mitigating the visual impact. CGIs should be provided to demonstrate the visibility or otherwise from the key vantage points (Bloomsbury Way, New Oxford Street – from Tottenham Court Road and Holborn ends).

Regarding the Bury Place staircase addition at roof level, no design issues are raised with this element of the proposals. It is considered that the removal of the window cleaning mechanism is likely to improve the appearance at parapet/roof level.

Finally, you are reminded that the details of the new glazing need to be approved. There would be a presumption to ensure all glazing has a consistent appearance/reflective quality to give the building a coherent character and appearance as part of the comprehensive refurbishment works.

### Amenity

The proposed roof terrace would be increased in size as a consequence of the removal of the window cleaning mechanism. A condition was added to 2012/1400/P which prevented such an area being used as a roof terrace without a subsequent permission, in order to prevent a loss of amenity to nearby occupiers. Therefore commentary/evidence should be provided in any subsequent application to demonstrate that the proposed enlarged areas of terrace would not lead to amenity concerns. Examples of possible amenity concerns include increased overlooking and noise/disturbance.

During the meeting it was mentioned that the terrace areas would be complemented with a variety of landscaping, which in-turn would decrease the total areas possible for significant numbers of people to use the terraces at any single time. It is advised that such landscaping is detailed in any future submission, with information provided on the exact landscaping and proposed mechanisms to ensure long-term feasibility. It could be that conditions could secure such details if exact details are unknown at the time of the application.

In terms of the additional Class A1/A3 use at the site, this is likely to be subject to similar conditions than those secured in permission 2012/1400/P, in respect of matters such as opening hours, music, waste and plant. The intention in this regard is to ensure the proposed use would not have a harmful impact on nearby amenity.

### Transport

From a transport perspective the provision of additional cycle parking facilities would be welcomed in principle. Please refer to Camden Planning Guidance 7 for precise details concerning the specifications for different types of cycle parking considered appropriate by officers. If precise details (elevations / floor plans / sections – all with dimensions) are provided at application stage this would avoid the need for further details to be sought via condition. CPG7 can be downloaded from the following link:

In terms of the proposed change of use at ground floor level, it is agreed that this is unlikely to have a significant impact on the number of trips to / from the site and thus the travel plan will not be required to be updated as a result of the proposed amendments.

The proposals indicate that instead of the existing vehicular lift facility to the basement floor it is now sought to incorporate a ramped access. Although the gradient is considered to be of a level that transport planning would normally resist, it is considered that, on balance, a flexible approach will be able to be taken. This is given the context of the physical constraints of the site, the relevant history and consideration of the requirements of cyclists. As such transport planning consider this element of the proposals to be adequate.

The relocation of the waste storage area to ground floor level, instead of basement floor level, raises no principle issues from a transport perspective. CPG1 should be considered in relation to the exact dimensions required for waste containers at this point. Such details should be denoted on the plans at the time of any application.

### Procedural matters

It is advised that cumulatively the proposed amendments outlined within the pre-application submission are of a nature which goes beyond what is considered to be minor material amendments to the approved scheme. As such it is advised that the most appropriate means for progressing the proposed amendments in a single application submission would be through a full application. Given that the 2012/1400/P permission has been partially implemented you may seek to refer simply to the changes proposed in the description (with the existing plans being those approved by 2012/1400/P and being implemented at present). As an alternative you may refer to the application as seeking 'amendments to permission 2012/1400/P...'. In such circumstances it is advised that you submit three sets of plans – 'as existing prior to any works', 'as approved by 2012/1400/P' and 'as proposed'. A deed of variation S106 Legal Agreement may be required for an application of this nature.

### Next steps

Prior to submitting any application you should read the guidance from the following link for submitting a valid application, including details of national and local area requirements, type of scale drawings and plans, and fees: <http://www.camden.gov.uk/ccm/navigation/environment/planning-and-built-environment/planning-applications/making-an-application/?sessionId=0A413F62C5C5AEC5D4C7F21C3E1FA7DC>

The Council's Cindex Service (<http://camden.talis.com/engage/>) should also be used to search for and engage local groups, with view to you setting out what public consultation you have carried out, what comments have been received and how your proposal has been amended in response to such comments.

### Concluding comments

It is advised that there are no principle land use issues with the proposed amendments and the works are likely to be appropriate from a transport planning perspective. In terms of design considerations some further work is required prior to officers being in a position to support all of the proposed amendments sought. Regarding amenity matters it is advised that commentary/evidence should be provided at application to fully justify the proposals; at the present point in time there is no obvious reason why such a case cannot be made for the proposed amendments. Hence in overall terms the proposed works are likely to be able to be considered appropriate at officer level should additional works, as outlined above, be undertaken prior to any submission.

This document represents the Council's initial view of your proposals based on the information available to us at this stage. It should not be interpreted as formal confirmation that your application will be acceptable nor can it be held to prejudice formal determination of any planning application we receive from you on this proposal.

Please note that if you (the applicant or their representative) have drafted any notes of the pre-application meeting(s) held with the council you cannot assume that these are agreed unless you have received written confirmation of this from the case officer.

If you have any queries about the above letter please do not hesitate to contact **Jonathan Markwell** on **020 7974 2453**.

Thank you for using Camden's pre-application advice service.

Yours sincerely

(sent via email)

Jonathan Markwell  
Senior Planning Officer – Development Management East Area Team