

Delegated Report (Members Briefing)		Analysis sheet		Expiry Date:	16/08/2013
		N/A / attached		Consultation Expiry Date:	25.7.13
Officer			Application Number(s)		
Charles Thuaire			2013/3787/P		
Application Address			Drawing Numbers		
1 Mabledon Place London WC1H 9AJ			See ddn		
PO 3/4	Area Team Signature	C&UD	Authorised Officer Signature		
Proposal(s)					
Reconfiguration of roof to provide relocated plant and services and new enclosed pavilion (170 sqm) for Class B1 office use, with associated external roof terrace and perimeter halo canopy structure.					
Recommendation(s):		Grant permission			
Application Type:		Full planning permission			

Conditions or Reasons for Refusal:	Refer to Draft Decision Notice					
Informatives:						
Consultations						
Adjoining Occupiers:	No. notified	171	No. of responses	00	No. of objections	00
			No. electronic	00		
Summary of consultation responses:	Plus site notice and press advert- No response					
CAAC/Local groups* comments: *Please Specify	<u>Bloomsbury CAAC-</u> “strongly objects to the proposed increase in apparent height and bulk of this really ugly building. The proposed pavilion is not sympathetic to the architecture of the existing structure, will be seen as a ‘trendy tart up’ and as such will be detrimental to the conservation area due to its elevated location design- projections and large areas of glazing which will add to light pollution and should be rejected.” <u>Officer response- see sections 4 and 5 below</u>					

Site Description

The property is a large office block purpose-built in the 1970's for NALGO, now called UNISON, on a corner site bounded by Euston Road, Mabledon Place and Flaxman Terrace. The building is now vacant following relocation of UNISON to new premises opposite in Euston Road. It contains a 11 storey tower facing Mabledon Place plus a 5 storey annex on the west side facing Euston Rd and a 3 storey element facing Flaxman Terrace containing a double height conference hall above a servicing area. There is a small Class A2 unit, originally accommodating Britannia Building Society, at 135 Euston Road with a separate raised entrance.

The pedestrian entrance is from Mabledon Place and surrounded by a prominent raised brick plinth. The pavement here is also mainly within the site ownership and there is an onstreet loading/taxi dropoff bay outside the entrance. At the rear is an offstreet servicing bay and a 2 way ramp giving access to 2-3 levels of basement carparking, plant and stores. The building has a somewhat brutal and monolithic form with a distinctive ribbed concrete profile and narrow slot windows. The top floor of the tower accommodates roof plant with a couple of projections above roof level.

The property adjoins the Bloomsbury conservation area along Flaxman Terrace at the rear.

Relevant History

23.12.11- 2011/4653/P- pp granted for Extensions and alterations to existing office block to include 13,116 sqm of Class B1a and 182 sqm of Classes A1/A2/A3, as follows: reconfigured basement floors to reduce carparking from 46 to 9 spaces; relocated and enlarged commercial unit at ground floor for flexible use within Classes A1/A2/A3; demolition of conference hall at rear and replacement by 2 new floors of offices; extension of 3rd and 4th floors of annex and addition of 5th floor on annex for offices with external terraces and green roofs on 3rd and 6th floor levels; replacement of 10th floor plantroom on tower by new offices; reconfigured and relocated roof plant; associated external alterations and

replacement fenestration including new canopy and forecourt at ground floor, new windows at 10th floor and new halo canopy at rooftop of tower.

23.9.13- 2013/3522/P- pp granted for Variation of condition 14 (development to be built in accordance with approved drawings) of planning permission dated 23/12/2011 (ref 2011/4653/P) for extensions and alterations to existing office block, namely to allow alterations to roof plant and halo canopy, alterations to ground floor entrance, alterations to windows and facades of all elevations and enlargement of roof terraces.

Relevant policies

LDF Core Strategy and Development Policies

- CS5 - Managing the impact of growth and development
- CS8 - Promoting a successful and inclusive Camden economy
- CS14 - Promoting high quality places and conserving our heritage
- DP13 - Employment sites and premises
- DP24 - Securing high quality design
- DP25 - Conserving Camden's heritage
- DP26 - Managing the impact of development on occupiers and neighbours
- DP28 - Noise and vibration

CPG 2013

London Plan 2011
NPPF 2012

Assessment

1. Background

1.1 The approved scheme has been previously revised (see history- 2013/3522/P) as a result of being worked up in more detail and various amendments introduced to satisfy technical/client requirements. This included *inter alia* the roof level being raised in height by 550mm and the halo amended in design so that it becomes taller and more dominant in order to conceal the plant room roof but also with the fin edge set back further to align with the parapet edge rather than oversailing it as before.

1.2 The approved roof plan for the tower now has 2 plant rooms and adjoining staircase access hatch in the centre of the oval shaped roof, and 2 areas on north and south sides for open plant equipment. The halo fin screen would match the height of the plant rooms and built against their walls to conceal them.

1.3 The current scheme is based on this amended roof design (which is being currently built) and seeks to reconfigure the roof level behind the approved halo fin structure in order to rationalise the plant rooms and structures, for which less space is now needed, and to take the opportunity to introduce a new pavilion structure accommodating an open plan office room plus a south facing external viewing terrace; the advantage is that the halo perimeter screen will make this infill almost hidden from ground level views.

2. Proposal

2.1 Relocation of various approved roof structures so that there is a larger area of enclosed plant and staircase rooms in the centre, a new lift with 1m high lift motor room overrun above, an area for open plan equipment on the north side facing Euston Rd, and a new enclosed pavilion structure on the open roof on the south side, with a 1m set back from the south facade to allow for an associated open roof terrace, plus erection of halo canopy structure (without some of its screens) as approved by the previous permission. The pavilion will be used for ancillary functions to the office tenants, such as parties, events and conferences. The associated terrace is to take advantage of the good views southwards over central London. The pavilion and plant rooms will all share the same roof structure in order to ensure a uniform profile and appearance, and as revised, the plans show that the rooms will be uniformly attached behind and directly to the approved perimeter halo canopy. The walls of the enclosed structure are set directly behind the halo supports and approx. level with the projecting fin height (2.8m); the roof behind has a shallow slope rising up to central ridge which is approx 0.5m higher than the approved plant room. The approved halo louvred screen panels will be retained around the solid walls of the plant/service core rooms, but the screens (not supports) will be omitted around the fully glazed façades of the new pavilion to allow views out between the halo vertical supports.

3. Land use

3.1 The provision of new B1 office accommodation (170sqm) here is acceptable in principle. Although the intention is to use it for ancillary purposes as described above, in that its layout and design would be impracticable for normal office use, there is the possibility that it could be used as just additional offices in the future. However there is no objection in landuse terms to additional B1 office floorspace here in a central London location and is in line with policy, noting that previous office expansion here was accepted in the original permission; the floorspace involved is relatively small and below the threshold of 200sqm requiring additional mixed uses or housing here and below that of 500sqm requiring additional Crossrail contributions. There is no valid reason why a condition should be imposed to prevent the space being used as offices in the future. However a condition will be imposed to ensure that the space is used for offices or associated ancillary purposes to the offices within the building, to ensure it is not used for other unrelated entertainment uses by other outside organisations.

4. Design

4.1 The reconfiguration of plant here is acceptable as it just reduces and relocates approved open and enclosed areas for plant around the roof behind the approved halo canopy screen and thus will still not be visible from ground level. The additional 2 flue pipes and lift motor overrun in the centre of the roof covering will not be visible from street level except possibly in very long views at which point they will have an insignificant impact.

4.2 The new lightweight roof structure in metal panels, both on roof and sides, and its minimal increase in height at ridge level will be hidden from street views behind the perimeter halo screen. In response to the CAAC's concerns, there will be no increase in apparent height or bulk compared to the approved scheme which had louvered panels screening roof plant along the entire perimeter edge. It should be emphasised that the perimeter halo screen canopy will be exactly the same height and location as previously approved.

4.3 The open plant area on the north side will be still hidden behind the approved halo screens so that the setback new roof structure here will not be apparent; the setback by 1m of the glazed pavilion from the south side, behind the approved halo line, will not be immediately obvious in views upwards from ground level and this lack of symmetry will not be apparent as it is not possible to view completely the side profile of the tower with both its ends at the same time.

4.4 The essential difference in visual terms from the approved scheme is the new glazed walls for the pavilion that will replace the halo's vertical panels, whereby a strip of glazed windows will be visible instead of the semi-solid screen louvres on the southern half of the tower. However it is considered that this will have a minimal impact on the tower's appearance and character due to the viewing distances and angles involved; indeed the montages provide show that this difference in façade treatment will be barely visible in many viewpoints. It is barely distinguishable in long views from Euston Road. It is barely visible in closer views from Euston Rd and Flaxman Terrace (the latter within Bloomsbury conservation area) due to the acute angles involved, whilst the differences in setback between north and south side edges will not be immediately apparent. The south side of the setback pavilion would be more visible in northwards views from Cartwright Gardens (also within Bloomsbury conservation area) but, in contrast to other viewpoints, the north side of the tower with enclosed plant rooms is not visible so there is no impact on symmetry here. Nevertheless the new glazing here, set back behind the tower's indented profile edge and the new projecting halo, will be only marginally visible and will blend in with the tower's masonry and glazing strips; it will not harm the overall design idiom of the building nor add to its bulk or prominence- indeed, the setback glazing will be less bulky than the approved halo screen panels which were at the roof edge. It is concluded that the remodelled roof here will preserve the character and appearance of the adjoining conservation area.

4.5 It is suggested that the glazing should be a smoked appearance to blend in with the adjoining grey metal louvred panels and to result in a unified treatment at roof level. It is proposed to reserve the details of materials by condition.

5. Amenity

5.1 The roof terrace will be approx. 38sqm in size; however only 22sqm will be a useable terrace facing south as the rest is actually a perimeter access walkway only 1m wide on the west and east sides. It is not anticipated that occasional use of this terrace to take opportunity of the views in summer months will cause a noise nuisance, given its height and distance from neighbouring residential properties in Flaxman Terrace. Similarly, there will be no overlooking from this terrace nor light pollution at night from the glazed facades of the pavilion, given the acute viewing angles involved. A condition will be imposed to ensure no music is audible from surrounding properties. As with the original scheme, it is anticipated that roof plant will comply with Council standards on noise levels and a condition is imposed to ensure this is the case. As all plant is now totally enclosed either within rooms or behind the halo structure, it will not be visible from street level and thus a condition requiring more details on their visual impact is not necessary.

6. Conclusion

6.1 The remodelled roof with a new pavilion for additional B1 use is considered acceptable in landuse, design and amenity terms.

DISCLAIMER

Decision route to be decided by nominated members on Tuesday 27th May 2014. For further information, please go to www.camden.gov.uk and search for 'Members Briefing'.