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Camden Council
Planning Department
Attention of David Fowler
Sent by email to planning@camden.gov.uk

25/09/2014

251-258 TOTTENHAM COURT ROAD AND 1 BEDFORD AVENUE
LONDON W1T 7RB

Revised core configurations/internal rationalisation, infill of vaults reduced to amend basement footprint, new fire door to rear, dry riser location on Bedford Avenue amended and horizontal transoms introduced to Bedford Avenue elevation granted under reference 2013/3880/P dated 20/12/13.

Application for non-material amendments 2014/5568/P

The Bloomsbury Association, who were involved in consultations with Exemplar during the pre-application stage of 2013/3880/P, wish to make the following comments on this application. We refer to each element of the proposed amendments using the numbers given in Gerald Eve's letter dated 21 August 2014.

1 - Revised core configuration

We would prefer to have seen the opportunity taken to introduce glazing on the north-east corner of the sixth and, possibly, fifth floors to avoid this being seen as a blind party wall from Bedford Square and to also exploit views into the Square for building occupiers. The north core staircase is not ideally located but may provide the opportunity for achieving at least the first objective. However, the submitted drawings do not provide sufficient information to determine whether the stair enclosure is glazed. If it was, we would welcome the change, which we feel would add value to the building. If the facade is not glazed, the Council will need to determine whether it is then a material amendment.

We note that drawings numbered 1217-P-106B, 107B and 108B show a reduction in the angled relationship of the northern facade to the party wall line on upper floors. This angular relationship was a significant feature of the permitted proposal explained to us at pre-application stage. It seemed a convincing means of terminating the roof line, handling the visual perception of upper floors seen from Bedford Square whilst also avoiding a precedent being established in terms of height on redevelopment of the remainder of the block bounded by Tottenham Court Road, Morwell Street and Bayley Street.

D&AS, April 2013, page 12 includes a massing diagram annotated 'Terraces cut back at party wall, providing termination of roof line'. This is elaborated upon on page 17 of the D&AS, which explains the significance of the angled set-back: 'To the northwest above the level of the party wall, the top two floors are partly glazed, to create a formal end to the

building and avoid a flank wall to the north. The junctions between the set-back floors and the southeast elevation are resolved with a series of angles that are intended to suggest that the whole form is carved out of a single volume - a volume that has been carefully manipulated to respond to the specific opportunities and constraints of this particular site.'

The south-east corner of the seventh floor is extremely important in the streetscape and in distant views of the building, a point stressed in the text and clearly evident in the images on pages 11 and 25 of the D&AS. In our view, it a retrograde step to locate toilet accommodation in this corner, as shown on drawing 1217-P-107B. The concept loses a lot in doing so.

We would prefer to see access to the service bay located as far north on Morwell Street as possible, close to its permitted location, in order to minimise its impact on the residential amenity of Bedford Court Mansions opposite.

We are concerned that these important aspects of the permitted proposal may have been diluted, if not lost. The Council needs to take a view as to whether, after seeking clarification from the applicant's team, they represent a material amendment to the approved proposal, requiring either revised drawings to be substituted or a new application to be submitted. It is our view that, in their current form, the drawn proposals do represent a material amendment.

2 - Extent of infill of vaults

No comment.

3 - Escape and fire access door

We have all recently been involved in the consultation stage of the Council's West End Project which proposes partial closure of Bedford Avenue at its junction with Tottenham Court Road. We would not like to see the location of the fire access door and dry riser inlet to be such that maintaining firefighting access constrains the Council's objective to enhance the streetscape for pedestrian benefit here.

4 - Location of dry riser inlet

As above.

5 - Horizontal transoms on the Bedford Avenue elevation

No comment.

Jim Murray
Chairman
Bloomsbury Association

Copies to:
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Councillor Sabrina Francis, London Borough of Camden
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Hugh Cullum, Bloomsbury Conservation Area Advisory Committee
Anthony Jenkins, Bloomsbury Conservation Area Advisory Committee
Robert Bargen, Georgian Group
Brett Steele, Director, Architectural Association School of Architecture
Max Neufeld / Clive Henderson, Charlotte Street Association
Chair, Bedford Court Mansions Limited

*The Bloomsbury Association is dedicated to the preservation and enhancement of Bloomsbury.
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