

Delegated Report		Expiry Date:	16/01/2015	Officer:	David Peres Da Costa
Application Address		Application Number(s)	1st Signature		2nd Signature
34 Bloomsbury Street LONDON WC1B 3QJ		2014/7258/P			
Proposal(s)					
Continued dual use of the property as either offices (Class B1) or for education use (Class D1).					
Recommendation(s):		Grant planning permission			
Application Type:		Full planning permission			
Consultations	Date advertised	21 days elapsed		Date posted	21 days elapsed
Press notice	4/12/14	25/12/14		Site notice	28/11/14
	Date sent	21 days elapsed	# Notified	# Responses	# Objections
Adjoining Occupier letters	26/11/14	17/12/14	17	-	-
Consultation responses (including CAACs):	No responses received.				
Site Description					
The application site comprises a four storey Grade II listed terraced property. The site is located on the east side of Bloomsbury Street and is in the Bloomsbury conservation area.					
Relevant History					
2011/0258/P: Change of use from office (B1) to dual use of office and education (Class B1/D1) for a temporary period of 5 years. Granted 21/03/2011					
Relevant policies					
NPPF 2012 London Plan 2011 LDF Core Strategy and Development Policies CS1 (Distribution of Growth) CS5 Managing the impact of growth and development CS8 Promoting a successful and inclusive Camden economy CS9 Achieving a successful Central London CS10 Supporting community facilities and services CS11 Promoting sustainable and efficient travel					

DP13 Employment sites and premises
DP15 Community and leisure uses
DP16 The transport implications of development
DP17 Walking, cycling and public transport
DP26 Managing the impact of development on occupiers and neighbours

Camden Planning Guidance

Assessment

Proposal: Permission is sought for the continued dual use of the property (377sqm) as either office B1 or a language school (Class D1).

Assessment:

Background

Planning permission was previously granted 21/03/2011 for a change of use from office (B1) to dual use of office and education (Class B1/D1) for a temporary period of 5 years (ref: 21/03/2011). The building is currently used for education and training and is occupied by 'The Shakespeare College'. The college provides language and business courses for foreign students. As the previous permission was for a 5 year period, the D1 use of the building would have to cease on or before 21st March 2016. The occupants want to remain at the current site, hence the current application. The applicant also wants to maintain flexibility as to the future use of the building.

Land use

Policy DP13 indicates that the Council will resist the change of use of buildings in business use to a non-business use unless certain criteria are met. The previous application justified the change of use from office partly on the basis that the listed status of the building imposed constraints on the use of the site for any other employment use other than B1 office. Evidence was also provided to demonstrate that the premises had previously been vacant and had been actively marketed. In addition it is acknowledged Bloomsbury Street's Central London location results in rent levels which are unlikely to be attractive to small and medium sized businesses.

Given the listed status of the subject property and the constraints this imposes on bringing the property up to modern standards, the previous evidence of poor demand for office space at this site and the existing language and business school occupying the property, the loss of the B1 office space is considered acceptable.

Where it can be demonstrated that a site is not suitable for any business use other than B1 offices, the Council may allow a change to permanent residential or community uses. Education facilities are considered to be a community use, although the key clientele for the college would be foreign students. The continued D1 use would generate employment benefits, providing 15 jobs at the premises. In addition, Core Strategy policy CS9(h) states that Camden will support the concentration of educational institutions within central London. As required under policy DP15, the site would provide an appropriate location for a community use: it is accessible by a range of public transport modes, including walking, cycling and public transport; and the Central London Area is an appropriate location for a school of this size (40-50 students).

Amenity

It is considered that the continued dual B1 office/ D1 education use would not generate significant additional impacts on the amenity of local residents.

Use class D1 uses include a wide variety of uses, including places of worship and museums. It would ordinarily be possible to change between different types of D1 use without the need for planning permission. Such other use class D1 uses could generate different impacts on the local area than an educational use. For example, more concentrated traffic generation and noise disturbance for the local area could be associated with a place of worship. It is therefore considered that it would be appropriate to restrict the permission to educational use only, through the use of a planning condition, in order to remove the ability to change to other (non-educational) D1 without planning permission. This would allow the Council to manage any potential impacts associated with a possible change to another type of D1 use.

Due to the limited size of the building (377 square metres) and the limited impact of the proposed use, it is not considered necessary to impose any conditions on the opening hours of the premises.

Recommendation: Grant planning permission