

Delegated Report		Analysis sheet		Expiry Date:	03/02/2015
		N/A / attached		Consultation Expiry Date:	08/01/2015
Officer			Application Number(s)		
Jonathan McClue			2014/5967/P and 2014/6477/A		
Application Address			Drawing Numbers		
Roma Bella 62 Great Russell Street London WC1B 3BG			Refer to Draft Decision Notice		
PO 3/4	Area Team Signature	C&UD	Authorised Officer Signature		
Proposal(s)					
<p>Planning Permission - Retrospective application for replacement of shopfront, including the removal of the original timber single glazed windows and the installation of a metal double glazed and openable shopfront.</p> <p>Advertising Consent - Retrospective application for erection of 1 x non-illuminated fascia sign.</p>					
Recommendation(s):		PP – Refuse AC - Refuse			
Application Type:		Full Planning Permission			

Conditions or Reasons for Refusal:	Refer to Draft Decision Notice					
Informatives:						
Consultations						
Adjoining Occupiers:	No. notified	101	No. of responses	01	No. of objections	01
Summary of consultation responses:	<p>Advertised in the Ham & High on 18/12/2014 Site Notice displayed from 10/12/2014</p> <p><i>Occupier of 46 Great Russell Street (Jarndyce Antiquarian Booksellers), objection:</i></p> <p>The proposal is out of keeping with the Conservation Area and the illuminated sign should be removed.</p> <p><u>Officer Comment:</u> See Harm to the Conservation Area from the Shopfront Alterations section within the main body of the report below.</p>					
CAAC/Local groups* comments: <small>*Please Specify</small>	<p><i>South Bloomsbury T.R.A, objection:</i></p> <p>The proposal results in the loss of original windows that contributed to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and the replacement modern windows would result in a significant detraction.</p> <p><u>Officer Comment:</u> See Harm to the Conservation Area from the Shopfront Alterations section within the main body of the report below.</p> <p><i>Bloomsbury CAAC, objection:</i></p> <p>Harm caused to the Conservation Area by the new windows. Original pattern and style should be reinstated.</p> <p><u>Officer Comment:</u> See Harm to the Conservation Area from the Shopfront Alterations section within the main body of the report below.</p>					

Site Description

This application relates to the ground floor shopfront (serving an A1 café) of a five storey terraced building on the south side of Great Russell Street. The host property lies near the junction with Bury Place and its upper floors are in residential use.

The original shopfront contributed to a uniform composition on Great Russell Street known as Museum Mansion. Its high quality shopfront (along with its neighbour at no. 63) is recognised in paragraph 5.107 of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area Appraisal including features such as the stall risers and the large shopfront windows. The host building and the entire block are cited as positive contributors within the Appraisal and occupy a highly important location immediately across from the grade I listed British Museum.

Relevant History

Planning

2004/2366/P: Retention of existing café use at ground floor and basement level (Class A3) **approved 20/10/2004**

2011/1556/A: Display of 1 x halo-illuminated fascia sign and 1 x internally-illuminated projecting sign and installation of awning to front elevation of existing restaurant (Class A3) **approved 29/06/2011**

Enforcement

EN14/0488: An enforcement notice was issued requiring the new openable shopfront to be removed and reinstated to its original form. **Final notice issued on 27/07/2014 with compliance date due on 01/12/2014**

Relevant policies

LDF Core Strategy and Development Policies

CS5 – Managing the impact of growth and development

CS14 – Promoting high quality places and conserving our heritage

DP24 – Securing high quality design

DP25 – Conserving Camden's heritage

DP26 – Managing the impact of development on occupiers and neighbours

DP30 – Shopfronts

Bloomsbury Conservation Area Statement

Camden Planning Guidance (CPG):

CPG1 (Design): Chapter 3 - Heritage and 7 – Shopfronts

CPG6 (Amenity)

Assessment

Proposal

Retrospective planning permission is sought for works to the shopfront of a building. The original two panes of timber framed glass have been removed and replaced with a metal glazed openable shopfront with three panes. The unlawful works are currently subject to an enforcement notice (ref: EN14/0488) based on harm caused to the visual amenity of the property, the character and appearance of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area and the setting of nearby listed buildings as well as the residential amenities of the neighbouring occupiers.

In addition, retrospective advertising consent is sought for a new non-illuminated fascia sign with a height of 1.25m; a width of 5.2m and a depth of 300mm.

The proposals will be assessed independently below. Their cumulative impact is considered to be harmful to the character and appearance of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area.

Harm to the Conservation Area from the Shopfront Alterations

The proposed shopfront is considered to be an incongruous alteration within the context of the building typology and its period and would be out of keeping with the building's parade of shops thereby diminishing its historical, aesthetic and architectural importance. The design treatment of folding doors erodes the aesthetic quality of the entire composition of this individual building and that of the Museum Mansions as a whole, serving to destroy the careful conceived architectural and visual unity. This alteration of the shopfront contributes to the cumulative loss of original features and characteristics, resulting in harm to the streetscene, the Conservation Area and the setting and special interest of the surrounding listed buildings.

Folding doors to shopfronts are contrary to Chapter 7 (para 7.12 page 67) of CPG1 (Design):

Folding shopfronts are not generally acceptable, particularly those on historic buildings such as listed buildings and those in Conservation Area. When open, they erode the appearance of the shopfront, creating visual void, and can increase disturbance to neighbouring properties particularly in the case of food and drink premises. When closed they appear as a row of doors rather than a shopfront. This creates a heavier appearance than a shopfront mullion and reduces the areas of glass in the shopfront.

Based on the above, it is considered that the proposal is contrary to policies CS14 – Promoting high quality places and conserving our heritage, DP24 – Securing high quality design DP25 – Conserving Camden's heritage and DP30 – Shopfronts as well as CPG1.

Harm to Residential Amenity from Openable Doors

The openable shopfront would result in increased noise being able to escape from the café use when it is opened, which would be particularly common during the summer months. The increase in noise would be likely to result in a significant level of harm to neighbouring residential flats, particularly those units directly above the café. Therefore, the proposed development would contradict policies CS5 – Managing the impact of growth and DP26 – Managing the impact of development on occupiers and neighbours of Camden's Local Development Framework Development Policies.

Fascia Sign

The fascia sign that was permitted under 2011/1556/A has been removed and replaced with a significantly wider, deeper and taller sign that would be visually prominent and result in a material level of harm to the character and appearance of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area. In particular, the sign would have an excessive depth of 300mm (the approval under 2011/1556/A has a depth of 150mm) from the front wall of the shopfront making it an incongruous addition to the streetscene that would be out of keeping with other fascia signs nearby. On this basis, the proposed fascia sign would

be contrary to CS14 – Promoting high quality places and conserving our heritage, DP24 – Securing high quality design DP25 – Conserving Camden’s heritage and DP30 – Shopfronts.

The sign would not be illuminated and it is not considered that it would be harmful to neighbouring amenity or highway safety.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Both the alterations to the shopfront and the new fascia sign would neither preserve nor enhance the Bloomsbury Conservation Area. In addition, the openable doors would be likely to create a significant level of noise and general disturbance for the occupiers of the flats above the café. Planning permission and advertising consent are both recommended for refusal, with the reasons outlined on the individual decision notices.