

Delegated Report		Analysis sheet		Expiry Date:		20/09/2013	
		N/A / attached		Consultation Expiry Date:		28/08/2013	
Officer				Application Number(s)			
Hugh Miller				2013/1837/P			
Application Address				Drawing Numbers			
5 Southampton Place London WC1A 2DA				See Decision Notice.			
PO 3/4	Area Team Signature	C&UD	Authorised Officer Signature				
Proposal(s)							
Change of use from existing office (Class B1) to dual use as Office (Class B1) or Non- Residential Institutional use (Class D1) at basement, ground and first floors and from existing office (Class B1) to D1 use at second and third floors.							
Recommendation(s):		Grant planning permission subject to s106 legal agreement					
Application Type:		Full Planning Permission					
Conditions or Reasons for Refusal:		Refer to Draft Decision Notice					
Informatives:							
Consultations							
Adjoining Occupiers:		No. notified	00	No. of responses	00	No. of objections	00
				No. electronic	00		
Summary of consultation responses:		Advertised in Ham & High 15/08/2013, expires 05/09/2013. Site Notice displayed 07/08/2013, expires 28/08/2013.					
CAAC/Local groups* comments: *Please Specify		Bloomsbury CAAC: At time of writing no response were received.					

Site Description

5 Southampton Place is a part 2-storey and 5- storey building, including lower ground floor and is located towards the middle of the street, on the eastern side of Southampton Place. It includes an internal courtyard. The premises are largely occupied by offices and provision of language classes plus staff room accommodation.

The building was Grade II* listed on 24th October 1951 and forms a listing with no. 1-8 Southampton Place. The building is within Bloomsbury Conservation Area.

Relevant History

July 1995 – PP Granted - The removal of four existing rooflights in the rear extension and replacement with one central rooflight; as revised by letter dated 19th May 1995; ref: 9500442.

October 1994 – PP Granted - Change of use on a personal basis from office within Class B1 to club (sui generis) including construction of rear basement level kitchen extension and installation of high level ventilation duct; revised by letters dated 5th July 1994 and 16th September 1994. (This was for the sole use of The Bloomsbury Club, and a condition on the consent stated that 'on their vacating the premises the use shall revert to the lawful use for Class B1 office purposes'.); ref: 9400203

November 1993 – PP Granted - Alterations including the enlargement of the opening between two ground floor rooms at No.5 linking No.5 and No.6 at second and third floor levels and new openings between No.5 and No.4 at basement and ground floor levels; ref: 9370122.

Relevant policies

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 Borough of Camden
- CS10 – Supporting community facilities and services
- CS11 – Pedestrian and cycling
- CS14 – Promoting high quality places and conserving heritage / conservation areas

- DP13 – Employment premises and sites
- DP15 – Community and leisure uses
- DP16 - The transport implications of development
- DP17 – Walking, cycling and public transport
- DP18 – Parking standards and limiting the availability of car parking
- DP19 - Managing the impact of parking
- DP24 – Securing high quality design
- DP25 – Conserving Camden's heritage / conservation areas
- DP26 - Managing the impact of development on occupiers and neighbours

Camden Planning Guidance 2011

- CPG 6 – Amenity
- CPG 7 – Transport
- CPG8 – Planning obligations

Revised Planning Guidance for Central London (2007)

Bloomsbury Conservation Area Appraisal and Management (2011)

London Plan 2010

NPPF 2012

Assessment

Situation

Presently, the host building is used as offices also some educational lecture rooms by the London School of Business and Finance.

Dual use is proposed for the lower ground floor (2 rooms), ground floor (3 rooms), first floor (2 rooms), whilst education is proposed at second floor (2 rooms) and third floor (2 rooms).

Proposal

- Change of use from existing office (Class B1) to dual use as Office / Education - Non-Residential Institutional use (Class B1/D1) at basement, ground and first floors and from existing office (Class B1) to D1 use at second and third floors.

Under the proposals, the building would be used as a language and business college for adult students.

As no physical works are proposed, the main issues to be considered are **a]** the principal of the proposed change of use and **b]** amenity and **c]** transport.

Principle of development – Change of use to dual use as Office / Education - Non- Residential Institutional use

Policy CS8 – seeks to support Camden's economy by: **a]** promote a concentration of office growth at King's Cross with further provision in the other growth areas and Central London to meet the forecast demand; **b]** safeguarding existing employment sites and premises in the borough that meet the needs of modern industry and other employers; **c]** encourage a mix of employment facilities and types.... Additionally, para 8.8 indicates the Council can meet the projected demand and therefore there is potential for change of use of older office premises to provide housing and community uses.

Policy DP13 states that, **a]** when it can be demonstrated that a site is not suitable for any business use other than B1(a) offices, the Council may allow a change to permanent residential uses or community uses; **b]** there is evidence that the possibility of reusing or redeveloping the site for similar or alternative business use has been fully explored over a period of time. However, given the considerations set out in policy CS8 and supporting text, it is not considered that these should apply to older office premises.

The applicant has indicated that the listed status of the building and the internal constraints of the domestic architecture are such that the site is not suitable for any other employment use than B1(a) offices. The plans submitted indicate that the narrow corridors and restricted circulation space in the building would limit the potential of the building to be used for other employment uses, in particular given its Grade II listed status.

The applicant has also shown that the premises became vacant in September 2012, with marketing of the premises commencing prior to the end of the last tenancy. The submitted marketing information states, "*During our marketing period there was limited demand from B1 occupiers for the following reasons:*

- a). Occupiers prefer to be in clusters; Southampton Place is a predominantly D1 use location which would be less likely to attract B1 occupiers who may have reservations about the flow of students in the area.*
- b). The building; there is very limited demand from B1 occupiers for a self-contained period building as it is totally unsuited to modern office occupiers' requirements. Today's office occupiers strongly prefer to be in a well-specified, DDA compliant building with efficient, flexible space on a single floor in a multi-let building (serviced by a lift - there is no lift at no.5), often in an open plan configuration which is convenient to fit out and alter during the term if necessary. Conversely, no. 5 Southampton Place*

provides c.4,000 sq ft across multiple floors which would provide inefficient and more costly office space (than being on a single floor) and its listed status means that limited alterations can be carried out, but the existing structural configuration works very well for B1 classroom configuration.

c). Within the vicinity of the site, there is ample supply of available office space ranging from 3,500sqft (325sqm) to 5,000sqft (425sqm), all offering good quality office space and recognised specification for office space, such as lift facilities, raised floor. (Please also refer to appendix for full information on locally available office space). “

The period of vacancy 11 months, (minimum 18 months -2years CPG) is considered minimal in which to seek potential occupiers. This narrow time frame would not be compliant with the CPG however this information does provide some indication that the property may not be viable for future B1a office use. The planning statement (ref.E13-022/PS with the application emphasises that market conditions are currently difficult, and it is noted that a temporary change of use to dual B1/D1 would allow the continuation of an active use of the listed premises, whilst allowing the premises to revert back to B1a (office) use at the end of the five year period.

Education facilities are considered to be a community use, although the key clientele for the college would be foreign mature students. The proposed dual B1/ D1 use would generate short term employment benefits, creating 15 jobs at the premises for a five year period. It is considered that the proposals would represent an improvement on the existing situation by providing employment opportunities at currently vacant premises whilst allowing the reversion to permanent office use after a period of five years.

It should be noted that Core Strategy policy CS9(h) states that Camden will support the concentration of medical, educational, cultural and research institutions within central London.

As required under policy DP15, the site would provide an appropriate location for a community use as it is accessible by a range of public transport modes, including walking, cycling and public transport, and is located in the central London area.

The grant of Dual/Alternative Use would allow the applicant to switch between uses for a period of **up to 10 years** from the grant of permission.

The building is occupied as offices and no alterations are proposed in regard its continued office use or educational use. It is likely therefore that the office use may well continue, however the options for the application would be the flexibility to implement a use in keeping with the economic conditions. Whilst the application seeks dual use, there is clearly the possibility that the office accommodation could end up being lost permanently. However, the permanent loss of office floorspace here is supported by policies CS8 and DP13 as noted above and in principle would be satisfactory.

It is therefore considered that, on balance, the proposed temporary change of use would be acceptable.

Transport

The site has a Public Transport Accessibility Level (PTAL) of 6b (excellent). Given the limited nature including access to cycle parking provision on the site, and in order to better reflect transport policy, a contribution to off-site provision in lieu of provision within the site is considered acceptable here. This shall be secured via a S.106 agreement. The applicant has confirmed that there is limited scope for on-site cycle parking facility; and has shown a willingness to enter into a legal agreement. The applicant has agreed to contribute to the provision of three cycle storage provision elsewhere in the locality.

Amenity

It is considered that the proposed dual B1 office/ D1 education use would not generate significant

additional impacts on the amenity of local residents, when compared to the existing office use.

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 (217 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.

Conclusion

- The proposed temporary change of use is considered to be acceptable. A planning condition should be provided in the Decision Notice removing the ability to change to non-education D1 uses.
- Grant conditional permission subject to a S106 agreement to secure contribution for the provision of three off-site cycle parking stands.

Recommend approval.