

<b>Delegated Report</b>		<b>Analysis sheet</b>	<b>Expiry Date:</b>	<b>20/03/2013</b>
		N/A / attached	<b>Consultation Expiry Date:</b>	<b>28/2/2013</b>
<b>Officer</b>			<b>Application Number(s)</b>	
Tania Skelli-Yaoz			2013/0442/P	
<b>Application Address</b>			<b>Drawing Numbers</b>	
8 Ridgmount Street London WC1E 7AA			See decision notice	
<b>PO 3/4</b>	<b>Area Team Signature</b>	<b>C&amp;UD</b>	<b>Authorised Officer Signature</b>	
<b>Proposal(s)</b>				
Change of use from offices (Class B1) use to flexible office (Class B1) and health care (Class D1) use.				
<b>Recommendation(s):</b>	Grant conditional planning permission			
<b>Application Type:</b>	Full Planning Permission			

<b>Conditions or Reasons for Refusal:</b>	<b>Refer to Draft Decision Notice</b>
<b>Informatives:</b>	

### Consultations

<b>Adjoining Occupiers:</b>	No. notified	<b>22</b>	No. of responses	<b>01</b>	No. of objections	<b>00</b>
			No. electronic	<b>00</b>		

<b>Summary of consultation responses:</b>	<p><u>29a Montague Street (The Bedford Estates):</u> Support.</p> <p>'When The Bedford Estates planned and developed this building we were constrained by the site size and shape, the existence of the Grade II listed former ballroom/dining room of the Academy Hotel, the requirement to retain part of the facade to Ridgmount Street and the aim of creating a building with an 'Excellent' BREEAM rating - which it has.</p> <p>Our architects have designed a fine building that truly adds to and enhances the Conservation Area.</p> <p>As the Marketing Report with the application shows, over a prolonged period there have been many single and multiple viewings of the building by prospective tenants. Detailed negotiations have followed in a number of cases, but have faltered on account of several factors, including: the relatively small building being on 3 floor levels; the absence of air conditioning seems to be outweighing the benefits of the building being very 'green'; the rear 'ballroom' area, which never fails to impress on first viewing, is seen as a very difficult space to use for conventional office purposes.</p> <p>The proposed flexible B1/D1 use by the Child &amp; Family Practice is an excellent alternative to pure B1 use. The ballroom is ideal for their purposes, such as occupational therapy. The numbers of permanent staff in the building would not be dissimilar to pure B1 use, so there would be no significant or material loss of employment space. Within the context of the Store Street Neighbourhood Centre we regard this proposed use and tenant as a good fit, bringing the Practice's staff and clients to the area without creating excessive amounts of people movements. The use has good community benefits and there are existing links between the Practice and the nearby hospital and academic institutions which will further strengthen the area's reputation as a centre of excellence in these fields. The Practice will take a lease for 15 years and so will be a long term occupier.</p>
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<b>CAAC comments:</b>	<u>Bloomsbury CAAC:</u> Advise that they have no comment to make.
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### Site Description

The site is located on the east side of Ridgmount Street at the junction with Store Street. It contains a former petrol station with adjacent offices, the redevelopment of which was granted in March 2010.

The immediate environs of the site are characterised by buildings of a variety of scales and uses including a parade of shops on the south side of Store Street. There are also office, residential and education uses in the immediate context.

The former dining room of The Academy Hotel is located to the rear of no. 4-8 Ridgmount Street. The dining room is grade II listed as part of the 15A to 30 Gower Street Georgian Terrace.

The site forms part of the Bedford Estate, is within Bloomsbury Conservation Area and the Fitzrovia Area Action Plan boundaries.

## Relevant History

**2012/2872/P** Details were APPROVED 20/07/2012 pursuant to condition 13 (ventilation and the extraction of fumes) of planning permission dated 22/03/10 (ref: 2009/2629/P) for the reconstruction of Bloomsbury Service Station following demolition of existing building, construction of a three storey building at 2 Ridgmount Street and erection a three storey building (behind a retained facade) at 4-8 Ridgmount Street and alterations to 2 Ridgmount Street to create an Class A1 (shop)/Class A3 (restaurant) and Class B1 (office) floorspace).

**2009/2629/P** pp was GRANTED on 22/03/2010 for the Reconstruction of Bloomsbury Service Station following demolition of existing building, construction of a three storey building at 2 Ridgmount Street and erection a three storey building (behind a retained facade) at 4-8 Ridgmount Street and alterations to 2 Ridgmount Street to create an Class A1 (shop)/Class A3 (restaurant) and Class B1 (office) floorspace.

## Relevant policies

### LDF Core Strategy and Development Policies

CS5 Managing the impact of growth and development  
CS8 Promoting a successful and inclusive Camden economy  
CS9 Achieving a successful Central London  
CS11 Promoting sustainable and efficient travel

DP13 Employment sites and premises  
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  
DP26 Managing the impact of development on occupiers and neighbours

Fitzrovia AAP (emerging)  
Camden Planning Guidance no. 5

NPPF 2012  
London Plan 2011

## Assessment

Permission is sought for the change of use of the existing premises from Class use B1 (office) to dual B1/D1 (office/non-residential). The site comprises some 696sqm and is currently vacant. A D1 user has shown interest in occupying the premises as a health clinic.

The main considerations for assessing this case are land use, amenity and transport, as follows;

### Land use-

Policy DP13 resists the loss of B1 office space where it is considered that the site is suitable for continued such use. The site has only recently (2012) been completed and has modern facilities, toilets on all levels, lift access and could be used by separate occupiers and therefore could be suitable for continued use as office use. Therefore, in order to justify its change of use to a different class use the applicant would need to demonstrate that there is no demand for this type of floorspace by undertaking a marketing exercise, in accordance with policy DP13 and CPG5.

The application includes a marketing statement which explains the limitations of the site and the marketing exercise undertaken to let it as B1 office space. The site is laid out on three levels and includes the grade II listed Academy Hotel ballroom to its rear, at ground floor level. The listed hall cannot be subdivided or re-arranged structurally and is a separate room from the other spaces within these premises. It forms about a third of the entire floorspace. The offices are laid out with a reception area and small office in the ground floor area, cycle storage and the ballroom. The first floor and the second floor are then respectively accessed from the front reception into a more narrow and long strip of floorspace arranged over the ground floor office and part of the adjoining A3 use, each with its own facilities.

The applicants laid out in their statement the type of marketing they have undertaken since shortly after planning permission was granted for the office use on site (2009/2629/P). The marketing (letting) agents were appointed in June 2010, 2 months after pp was granted. Active marketing (to include a pre-completion brochure and advertising hoarding) commenced in September 2010 when construction started and when the development was completed in February 2012, a 'to let' board was erected on site. Up until December 2012 the applicants attach a well documented list of at least 6 specific interests into the property for a B1 use. However, while each interest fell through eventually for its own reasons the prevailing reason was the layout of the existing space over several floors. The listed 'ballroom' was also raised as an issue for many of the interested parties, who did appreciate its aesthetic merits and special character, but nonetheless felt that it would not be suitable for their business due to its layout restrictions. Interested parties felt that the lack of a single floor plate and the restrictions on the listed 'ballroom' would limit their business to too much to be viable. The property has therefore been marketed over a period of 2 years and 6 months to no avail.

The Child and Family practice, who intend to relocate from the existing practice in Westminster, feel confident that the entire space is suitable for their needs and suggest they would use the ground floor side office as a waiting room and the 'ballroom' for group or individual therapy, meeting and training events without the need to carry out any internal alterations. The upper floors would be subdivided to accommodate up to 14 consulting rooms.

The proposed health use is a private enterprise. However, the applicant states that the practice is a collaborative group of practitioners providing services to young people and their families. Many of the practitioners are attached to major NHS institutions, in particular Great Ormond Street and UCH and therefore the subject location is of particular interest in terms of easy access to these medical institutions.

The emerging Fitzrovia Area Action Plan, encourages small to medium enterprises to be retained in the area in line with policy DP13. However, given the above marketing evidence and statement submitted by the applicants, and the constraints of the premises, it is considered that on balance, the proposal complies with policy DP13 and CPG5.

#### **Amenity-**

The site is located adjacent to residential properties on Ridgmount Street as well as hotels, educational institutions and businesses on other sides.

Hours of operation: The applicant states the health practice use would operate no different than an office user and in order to optimise the accessibility of the service to patients, may wish to use the premises at various times including evenings, as well as weekends. A restriction to reflect this was not imposed on the previous B1 permission and is not considered necessary in this case, however, as the proposal is for a D1 use which could potentially include a gym or a place of worship it is recommended to include a condition restricting audible music levels as well as a standard noise condition.

A use class restriction to ensure the premises revert back to B1 use upon the vacation of the D1 user is recommended in order to safeguard the amenities of the area.

The proposal is therefore unlikely to adversely affect the amenities of adjoining residential occupiers and, accordingly, complies with policy DP26.

#### **Transport-**

The site is located northwest of the corner of the junction of Ridgmount Street and Store Street. The site has a Public Transport Accessibility Level (PTAL) of 6b (excellent).

The application includes information about the assessment of trips including the model split that might be expected at the site. The data is limited and only based on two similar sites across London

however it does give a reasonable indication as to the kinds of trips that may be made to the site. Approximately 10% of visits will be made to the site by car and 20% by taxi. The proposals suggest that there will only be one car trip and 3 taxi trips generated during the peak hour and that this is not significant. It also suggests that the trip generation for the site will be similar to that of the existing use. The proposal does not include any parking and will be subject to a Section 106 Car Free development clause.

Overall, it is considered that the proposed use would not be dramatically different from an office use. The proposal is acceptable subject to a Section 106 Car Free agreement, travel plan and monitoring.

On this basis the scheme accords with policies DP17, DP18 and DP19.

**Other issues-**

There are no internal alterations to the listed hall that would require an LBC application. The applicant has been made aware that any alterations in the future would require Listed Building Consent.

**CIL-**

Not applicable as no new floorspace is created.

**Summary-**

The proposal is considered acceptable and it is recommended to grant conditional planning permission.