



Deloitte LLP
Athene Place
66 Shoe Lane
London
EC4A 3BQ
United Kingdom
Tel: +44 (0) 20 7007 9000
Fax: +44 (0) 20 7583 1198
www.deloitte.co.uk
Direct: +44 (0) 20 7303 2908
loliva@deloitte.co.uk

Planning and Regeneration
2nd Floor,
5 Pancras Square,
c/o Town Hall,
Judd Street,
London,
WC1H 9JE

FAO Matthias Gentet

01 October 2015

Dear Matthias,

Response to objection to planning application (2015/4185/P) relating to works at 25 Bedford Square, WC1B 3HW.

We understand that on the 16 September, the Bloomsbury Conservation Area Advisory Committee (BCAAC) lodged an objection in relation to planning application 2015/4185/P. The application seeks approval for:

"Erection of a single storey extension within the rear courtyard. Installation of 4 x condenser units to roof level and associated pipe-work connections, 1 x AC Unit in front pavement vault at basement level, widening of opening to lift motor room and addition of new louvered timber doors and addition of an extract fans to rear elevation at basement level, repairs and redecoration to roof level and external elevations all in connection with offices (Class B1a)".

Within their objection, the BCAAC have raised four concerns. We respond to each of these concerns in turn below and provide further clarity to demonstrate how the heritage significance of the building has been carefully considered throughout the design of the proposal.

- 1. The subject of demolition shown on the drawings in front of all windows, with specific concern for the shutters and fittings, although it was stated that removal of radiators would be considered acceptable.**

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Response

We can confirm that the demolition works indicated on the drawings relate to the removal of the radiators only. No further fixings will be removed as part of the proposals, with shutters remaining in situ.

2. A lack of an elevation showing the extension

Response

Please refer to drawings 25-P07A 'Proposed Section A-A' and 25-P06A 'Rear Elevation Proposed'. These drawings are available online within the document labelled 'All Drawings', but for ease of reference we have enclosed a copy of each drawing with this letter.

The elevation of the extension in Proposed Section A-A appears identical to the existing elevation shown in Existing Section A-A. This is because the extension is an infill, as can be seen on basement floorplans 25-E000 (existing) and 25-P000A (proposed). Therefore the side elevation is not proposed to change in appearance. There will be a minor change to the rear elevation following the small infill extension, as illustrated on drawing 25-P06A.

3. The installation of air conditioning units on environmental grounds

Response

It has been suggested that the environmental credentials for the installation of AC units is considered. The Noise Impact Assessment prepared by Clarke Saunders Acoustics and submitted as part of this application assesses the impact on neighbouring residential amenity with regards to noise. It concludes that the proposed AC units would comply with the noise emission design criterion set by Camden Council.

It is recognised that the introduction of AC units will consume more energy, however, following installation of air source heat pumps, the heating efficiency will be considerably improved within the building, thereby saving energy elsewhere. The introduction of comfort cooling will significantly improve the occupancy comfort, particularly during the summer months, and this will ensure this historic building meets modern day office standards.

4. The potential visibility of the air condition units proposed to be located on the roof

Response

Four air conditioning units are proposed to be located on the roof and between the two roof apices. We can confirm that they will not be visible from ground level in Bedford Square or the rear courtyard, as demonstrated by drawing 25-P07A 'Section A-A – Proposed'. The height of the units will not exceed the front roof ridgeline, please refer to the proposed front elevation drawing 25-P05. The height between the top of the ridge and the bottom of the valley will be 990mm. The condensing units are 823mm tall and the 'big foot supports are 95mm high bringing the total height to 918mm. This is 72mm below the ridge line.

It is recognised that one corner of the AC units will be visible in a true rear elevation of the building, as shown on the proposed rear elevation 25-P06A. Therefore, it will be visible to higher level units to the rear of the property. These units are 17m away from the building.

It is considered that the rear elevation of the building is less sensitive than the front elevation, which contributes directly to the character of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area (BCA), and specifically Sub-Area 5 'Bedford Square / Gower Street'. Moreover, buildings to the rear of the Number 25 are predominantly in office and education use (Use Classes B1 and D1) and it is therefore very unlikely that the part-visibility of a condenser unit would impact on residential amenity and outlook. The casing of the proposed AC units is proposed to be of similar colour to the grey slate of the roof and will therefore blend into the roof slopes.

The addition of AC condenser units on the roof of the building is considered the most appropriate option for the following reasons:

- Given the heritage sensitivities associated with a Grade I listed building, this option presented the least impact to the external appearance and significance of the building from ground level.
- Given the building's location within the BCA, this option ensured that the character of the wider BCA was not impacted, with no change to views from Bedford Square, and a minor change in rear outlook for units in higher floors of properties behind the building.

Alternative options were considered during the design process, such as locating the AC units in the front lightwell (at basement level) or rear courtyard (also at basement level). However, these were considered to be more detrimental to the significance of the building and the character of the BCA and likely more visible to users of surrounding buildings.

General comments.

The building was last refurbished in the late 1980's, following permission received in 1988 for an application at numbers 21/25 Bedford Square. Since then, the building has become outdated and tired in appearance and not fit for purpose as a modern and functional office space. The proposals are for a comprehensive set of refurbishment works to be carried out with the utmost regard to the sensitivity of the Grade I Listed building. The implementation of the refurbishment works would safeguard the long-term use of the building for office space, which is in-keeping with the surrounding uses within Bedford Square.

If you have any further questions in relation to the application then please contact my colleagues Vicky Woollett (020 7303 3053 / vwoollett@deloitte.co.uk) or Ellie Bird (020 7007 3891 / ebird@deloitte.co.uk).

Yours faithfully,



Leonie Oliva

Deloitte LLP

