

<b>Delegated Report</b>		<b>Analysis sheet</b>		<b>Expiry Date:</b>		06/09/2013	
		N/A		<b>Consultation Expiry Date:</b>		15/08/2013	
<b>Officer</b>				<b>Application Number(s)</b>			
Angela Ryan				2013/4368/P			
<b>Application Address</b>				<b>Drawing Numbers</b>			
23-26 Museum Street London WC1A 1JT				Please refer to the 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>							
Partial change of use from office (Class B1a) to residential (Class C3) at fourth floor and part second floor levels to provide 3 x 2 bedroom flats, and change of use of an office at lower ground floor level for use as a bike store.							
<b>Recommendation(s):</b>		Grant planning permission subject to a S106 Legal Agreement					
<b>Application Type:</b>		Full Planning Permission					
<b>Conditions or Reasons for Refusal:</b>		Refer to Draft Decision Notice					
<b>Informatives:</b>							
<b>Consultations</b>							
<b>Adjoining Occupiers:</b>		No. notified	99	No. of responses	1	No. of objections	0
				No. electronic	1		
<b>Summary of consultation responses:</b>		A site notice was displayed on 17/07/2013, expiring on 07/08/2013, and a public notice published in the local press on 25/07/2013, expiring on 15/08/2012. One letter of support was received from the occupier of no. 46 Museum Street.					
<b>CAAC/Local groups* comments:</b> <small>*Please Specify</small>		<b>Bloomsbury CAAC:</b> were consulted and confirmed that they did not wish to comment on the application>					

### Site Description

The site comprises a five-storey plus basement building end of terrace building, located on the west side of Museum Street. It is currently in mixed commercial/residential uses comprising office/storage uses in the basement, retail use on the ground floor, part office and residential on the first floor, and office use on the second, third and fourth floors. Part of the second floor and fourth floor are currently vacant. To the north of the site on the opposite side of the road lies a three storey building on the junction of Museum Street and Little Russell Street that is currently in use for a public house on the ground floor with residential accommodation situated above. The south the site is adjoined by a four

storey building that with ground floor retail use and what appeared to be in office use above, to the east of the site on the opposite side of Museum Street, lies three-storey buildings containing a mix of commercial use on the ground floors (retail, café, offices), with residential accommodated located on the upper floors. To the west of the site lies a part four-storey, part six-storey residential block.

The site is not listed but lies within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area. The building is identified as making a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area.

### **Relevant History**

**22/01/1976**- Permission **refused** for the change of use including works of conversion of a residential apartment to a consulting room and bed-sitter for a caretaker (Ref: 21828).

**17/09/1976**- Permission **granted** for the conversion of suite 3 on the first floor into two self-contained flats (Ref: 22896).

### **Relevant policies**

#### **LDF Core Strategy and Development Policies**

##### **Core Strategy:**

- CS1 (Distribution and growth)
- CS3 (Other highly accessible areas)
- CS5 (Managing the impact of growth and development)
- CS6 (Providing quality homes)
- CS8 (Promoting a successful and inclusive Camden economy)
- CS9 (Achieving a successful Central London)
- CS11 (Promoting sustainable and efficient travel)
- CS14 (Promoting high quality places and conserving our heritage)
- CS18 (Dealing with our waste and encouraging recycling)
- CS19 (Delivering and monitoring the Core Strategy)

##### **Development policies:**

- DP2 (Making full use of Camden's capacity for housing)
- DP5 (Homes of different sizes)
- DP6 (Lifetime homes and wheelchair housing)
- DP13 (Employment sites and premises)
- DP17 (Walking, cycling and public transport)
- DP18 (Parking standards and the availability of car parking)
- DP20 (Movement of goods and materials)
- DP22 (Promoting sustainable design and construction)
- DP23 (Water)
- DP24 (Securing high quality design)
- DP25 (Conserving Camden's heritage)
- DP26 (Managing the impact of development on occupiers and neighbours)

#### **Camden Planning Guidance 2011:**

**CPG1 - Design: Chapters 1 & 10**

**CPG2- Housing: Chapters 1, 4 and 5**

**CGP5- Town Centres, retail & employment: chapters 1 & 6**

**CPG6 - Amenity: Chapters 1, 6, 7 & 9**

**CPG7- Transport: Chapters. 1, 5 & 9**

**CPG8 – Planning Obligations Chapters 1, 2, 10.**

**Bloomsbury Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy 2011**

**Revised Planning Guidance for Central London 2007**

**London Plan 2011**

**National Planning Policy Framework 2012**

## Assessment

### **Proposal:**

The applicant seeks permission for the partial change of use from office (Class B1a) to residential (Class C3) at part second floor and fourth floor and levels to provide 3 x 2 bedroom flats. The applicant also proposed to change the use an office at lower ground floor level for use as a bike store.

It should be noted that planning permission was previously granted to use part of the first floor for residential accommodation (see relevant planning history).

The key considerations are:

- The principle of the land use
- Loss of employment
- The quality of residential accommodation
- Impact of the development on the character and appearance of the host building and conservation area
- Amenity
- Transport
- Sustainability

### **Principle of the land-use**

In line with the priorities set out in policy CS6, policy DP2 seeks to maximise the supply of additional homes within the borough. The partial change of use of the site for residential use broadly accords with the aims of this policy. The proposed land use for residential accommodation is considered to be acceptable in this instance.

### **Loss of employment:**

Policies CS8 and DP13 generally resists the loss of business uses. Policy DP13 also requires evidence of marketing to demonstrate that the building is no longer suitable for continued employment use. However, CS8 paragraph 8.8 and Camden Planning Guidance 5 paragraph 6.3 is relevant and indicates that the supply of offices is expected to meet the projected demand over the plan period and as a result may allow a change from B1(a) offices to another use in some circumstances, such as older office premises or buildings that were originally built as residential dwellings. The priority is for the replacement use to be permanent housing or community use.

Change of use to permanent residential is likely to be considered appropriate provided that sufficient information is submitted to justify the loss of employment floorspace. In this a letter was submitted from a local letting agent who confirmed that due to the domestic nature of the property and in particular, the rather inflexible cellular layout, has made identifying tenants more difficult as many tenants tend to look for accommodation that can be divided as necessary to suit their specific requirements; and increasingly occupiers demand more flexible space as it is more efficiently used. A schedule of office availability was also provided, which confirmed that there was 25 vacant office buildings located within the vicinity of the application site providing 3,274 sq ft of vacant office floorspace.

The remainder of the existing office floorspace located at the site at basement, first, second and third floor levels is proposed to be retained.

Given the above the loss of employment floorspace is considered to be acceptable in the circumstance.

**Affordable housing:**

The proposal does not meet the threshold for affordable housing/contributions, however the building is capable of providing 10 residential units or 1000m<sup>2</sup> of residential floorspace should any subsequent applications be submitted for the change of use to residential of the remaining office floorspace. A S106 clause is recommended that should there be any further permissions be submitted for residential floorspace or units at the site, which in aggregate with this application exceed the affordable housing thresholds, there will be a requirement to secure a contribution towards the provision of affordable housing.

**Quality of residential accommodation:**

Three market housing units are proposed comprising 3 x 2 bedroom flats. The proposed mix is considered to be appropriate, and accords with the dwelling size priority table outlined in policy DP5 where well over 40% of the proposed units are 2 bed flats (100%), aligning with the highest priority for market housing. Hence the mix is welcomed and is an indication of the scheme contributing to the creation of mixed and inclusive communities.

As outlined by policy DP26h-k, the housing units are considered to provide a satisfactory level of residential amenity. Each unit is entirely self-contained and the size of each unit (in terms of overall floorspace and bedroom sizes) meets the requirements of CPG2-residential development standards and London Plan standards.

All of the units are triple aspect, and each habitable room has access to natural daylight and outlook although one of the bedrooms in one of the fourth floor flat has looks out onto a lightwell and the rear of the residential block located in Little Russell Street to the rear of the site. Given that a majority of the habitable rooms overlooks Museum Street or Little Russell Street it is considered that on balance a satisfactory level of residential amenity has been achieved overall.

In terms of access, the existing arrangement at the site will be retained. Level access cannot be achieved as there is an existing step at street level, with two steps located within the internal lobby. There is lift access to all floors

In terms of access matters the applicant has submitted commentary within the Design and Access Statement as to measures introduced to accord with the lifetime home standards. The statement confirms that 8 out of the 16 lifetime home criteria will be met, plus one of the criteria partially met given that all new internal doors at to achieve the required width. Seven of the criteria cannot be met given the existing site constraints (no parking, stepped entrance, communal stairs and lift, door widths for existing doors, wheelchair accessible entrance WC and drainage for shower, ease of access into bathroom, and glazing and window handle heights). The criteria for potential stair lifts through the floor is not applicable in this instance as

In overall terms it is considered that the quality of accommodation for future occupiers will be satisfactory and there will not be a significant loss of amenity.

The development will be CICL liable as three new residential units are being created at the site.

**Impact of the development on the character and appearance of the host building and conservation area**

The building is identified as making a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area, within sub-area 7. It is also opposite listed buildings to the north, north-east and

north-west. Paragraph 5.114 of the Conservation Area Appraisal states:

*“The northern end of Museum Street has considerable visual consistency derived from the four-storey, stucco-faced mid 19th century terraces which turn the corner into Great Russell Street. Tavistock Chambers is situated at the junction with Bloomsbury Way and is seen together with Nos 23-26 (consec) Museum Street, since they are both red brick mansion blocks with residential uses above ground-floor shops. They continue the theme of strong parapet lines, vertically proportioned fenestration, horizontal banding and rustication along the street”.*

The applicant does not proposed to make any changes to the external façade of the building and as such it is the development would not have any adverse impact on the character and appearance of the host building and conservation area.

**Amenity:**

Given that no new openings are proposed/no works are being done to the external façade of the building it is considered that the proposal would not raise amenity issues such as the loss of light, loss of outlook, loss of privacy, overlooking, or adding to the sense of enclosure.

The proposed non habitable rooms (Kitchen, studies and bathrooms) and one bedroom overlook an existing lightwell providing views of some of the terraces connected to the residential block located on Little Russell Street; however, there will be no direct overlooking into neighbouring properties. The bathroom windows do not face any of the existing terraces or habitable room windows. Moreover, this development would have been permitted development if the site had not been located within the exemption zone. It should be noted that 99 neighbours were consulted and no objections was received as a result.

The existing apartments have their waste collected direct from the street by the Local Authority at regular intervals. It is proposed that the current arrangement is maintained, as there is no facility to provide refuse storage at ground floor level. Moreover, a 10 litre storage containers are proposed within each apartment for the storage of waste. As such it is considered that the proposal would not result in litter pollution at the site.

As such it is considered that neighbouring residential amenity would not be significantly affected.

**Transport:**

The site is within a controlled parking zone (CPZ) which operates between 08:30-18:30 Monday to Saturday. There are more permits than spaces available in this locality. It also has a PTAL rating of 6b indicating that the site has excellent accessibility to the public transportation network. Given the above a car-free development is sought for the additional residential unit created (which means future occupiers will not be able to apply for on-street parking permits). This is to be secured via a S106 legal agreement.

Four cycle spaces has been provided, which exceeds the Council’s standards for 3 parking spaces. Cycle storage is proposed at basement level and will be accessed via the main entrance door at ground floor level and down a staircase providing access down into the basement. Although the cycle storage location is not ideal it was established that it could not be located at ground floor level given the existing constraints of the site and the ground floor providing a very narrow lobby area for the existing tenants at the site. As such the location is considered to be acceptable in this instance.

**Sustainability:**

As part of the proposed works there will be a number of upgrades to the existing building fabric and services, which will improve the energy usage within the building. The external walls of the

apartments will be lined with insulated plasterboard to improve the thermal performance of the units. The apartments will have a modern gas condensing boiler will be fitted to provide hot water and heating. Existing lighting will be replaced with a low energy type.

**Recommendation: Grant planning permission subject to a S106 Legal Agreement for car-free development**