



**112A GREAT RUSSELL STREET, LONDON WC1B 3NP**

CHANGE OF USE OF PART GROUND FLOOR AND BASEMENT LEVELS -4 AND -5 FROM CAR PARK (SUI GENERIS) TO 166 BEDROOM HOTEL (CLASS C1), INCLUDING ALTERATIONS TO GROUND FLOOR ELEVATIONS ON GREAT RUSSELL STREET AND ADELINE PLACE.

Application for planning permission: 2015/3605/P

7 January 2016

The Bloomsbury Association objects to this application and a summary of our concerns was contained in our representation dated 2 August 2015. We indicated that we would be elaborating on these in subsequent submissions, of which this is one.

The applicant has not substantially varied the design proposal but is seeking to address the reasons for refusal given in the previous application (2013/5075/P) - to address a deficiency in the lack of sufficient technical support for the proposal. The current application is based on the submission of professional opinion to demonstrate that all the past reasons for refusal can be met, albeit with significant monitoring by local residents and/or the Council, and that all the objections can be overcome.

We are, as our summary statement indicated, particularly concerned that the proposal represents an intensification or over-development of the site for a single use - hotel - to the extent that its cumulative impacts on and off-site cannot be shown to be manageable without a significant and inappropriate degree of monitoring control. It is difficult to quantify over-development from first principles and the approach we have taken is to seek expert professional reviews of the supplementary information accompanying the application and to assess whether it is sufficiently robust to demonstrate that the proposal can be delivered without unmanageable, harmful impacts. Our own commissioned review of this information has concluded that it cannot.

**Adeline Place plant**

In our representation dated 4 January 2016 we commented on drawing DMWR PL-00300 P1, showing a revision of the proposed elevation to Adeline Place that was made available on the Council's planning web page on 11 December 2015. This together with revised plan drawings numbered 2897-P-11-Rev-F(2) and M-570-7000 Rev P8 have been further reviewed by our advisers, Waterman Infrastructure and Environment whose comments accompany this letter.

They conclude that:

- The deficiencies raised in their previous review, dated 18 October 2015 have not been resolved nor do they address the concerns expressed in their letter of the 30 September.
- The proposal is still not sufficiently robust to demonstrate that the proposed development would provide a suitable M&E solution or would be capable of meeting the Council's sustainability targets.
- Fundamentally, not enough information has been provided to demonstrate that the ventilation and air-conditioning proposal would be adequate in practice, nor that a workable solution is available that would not adversely affect the amenity of the residential building opposite or the occupiers of rooms above.
- The reviewed documents demonstrate that the requirements of paragraph 124 of the NPPF and policies DP22 and DP32 of the Council's LDF cannot be met with any certainty.

Of fundamental concern is the developer's assumption that they can use the land immediately around

the eastern perimeter of the St Giles Hotel either for access or its airspace. We understand that the St Giles Hotel own all the land that comprises the western part of the footway on Adeline Place, a strip of land that was a railed open basement area for the original YMCA building that was redeveloped in the 1970s. Criterion Capital's rights of access and air over the land are limited to between the kerbs at the existing car park entry and exit ramps. This misapprehension creates an unworkable situation on a number of fronts:

- The entrance to the proposed electricity substation is shown with doors opening onto the St Giles' land which, as LDF will require vehicle access 24/7 from the public highway for maintenance and equipment replacement would be unachievable. The provision of air for ventilation plant within the substation would also be unachievable.
- The same is true of the access to the refuse store, which, by being shown coincident with the firefighting lobby, would also fail to comply with Part B of the Building Regulations. A refuse store is a fire risk and it would also not be permitted to take the refuse bins in and out of the fire fighting lobby as the risk of rubbish and refuse bins blocking the escape route and lobby would be considered too great.
- It being designated by the highway authority as private forecourt beyond the applicant's demise, the applicant cannot resurface the pavement, cannot remove the dropped kerb and cannot erect new bicycle stands. It is unfortunate, but nor can they prevent the St Giles Hotel from using their land as they wish, which is to park cars and motorcycles. So this aspect of the proposal is also unachievable.
- Furthermore, drawing DMWR PL-00300 P1 proposes an open gate to the retained access ramp. As Waterman has pointed out, eight air source heat pumps are located on the rear side of the ramp alongside air discharge from below. It is likely that these condenser units would need to be of considerable power and can be expected to be noisy and produce a noticeable output of air and elevated temperature. As was highlighted by Sandy Brown Associates in their acoustics review, dated 17 November 2015, the revised Noise Impact Assessment submitted by the applicant's consultants relies on the attenuation of the air handling units to keep noise levels at the intake/exhaust louvres 10 dB or more lower than the levels for the air source heat pumps. This will not be possible through an open gate.

The proposed standby generator is likely to be a source of high levels of noise emissions. The applicant's Noise Impact Assessment states that it 'will be located adjacent to the ASHPs in the plant room, behind a louvre'. The generator is not located on the drawings nor is there any plant room.

Drawing M-570-7000 Rev P8 also shows the relocation of a kitchen extract serving VQ from above the existing car park entrance ramp to the proposed façade at ground level. This extract has recently been the subject of enforcement action by the Council under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 and should not be retained. A further unauthorised kitchen extract from Hudson's House bar/restaurant appears to have been removed with no proposed replacement.

In a situation where the physical confines of the space are limited and there are major constraints affecting the design solution, it is imperative for the applicant to demonstrate that there is a design solution that is achievable. Taken individually and collectively, the fundamental deficiencies in the indicative design solution, suggest that the proposal, if granted permission, is not implementable. The grant of planning permission on the current basis would be both unsafe and inconsistent with the Council's and national planning policies. We therefore urge the Council to refuse the application.

Jim Murray  
Chairman  
**Bloomsbury Association**

*Copies to:*

Keir Starmer, MP

Andrew Dismore, GLA

Councillor Adam Harrison, London Borough of Camden

Councillor Sabrina Francis, London Borough of Camden

Councillor Rishi Madlani, London Borough of Camden

Councillor Sue Vincent, London Borough of Camden

Raymond Yeung, London Borough of Camden

Bloomsbury Conservation Area Advisory Committee

Local residents and businesses

**Waterman Infrastructure and Environment comments referred to in the text**

**From:** "Duffy, Patrick" <patrick.duffy@watermangroup.com>  
**Subject:** RE: UNDERGROUND HOTEL  
**Date:** 7 January 2016 17:58:09 GMT  
**To:** Bloomsbury Association <[REDACTED]>

[REDACTED]

I have reviewed with my colleague the situation and the new drawings you have emailed through. The fundamental issue for us is that they have not provided a enough information to demonstrate that what they are proposing would work.

The drawings regarding the services are clearly indicative and indicate the condensing units being located on the rear side of the ramp access to the basement. In this scenario the issues we raised previously remain relevant.

It may be possible for these to be located to the rear of the louvres shown on the drawing and the elevation but without the detail of the proposals it is not clear that the louvres are the correct size to accommodate the condenser requirements.

Also it is likely that these condenser units would need to be of considerable power and can be expected to produce a noticeable output of air and elevated temperature. If located at the louveres this could affect occupiers of rooms above if these windows are able to be opened.

I understand that the developer does not have the option of relocating this plant to roof level, as a result the potential for other solutions to be available would appear limited.

As a result it is evident that our request for further detail remains valid in order to demonstrate that the proposed solution will be adequate in practice and so the scheme as proposed could be implemented without amendment. More detail would be required to demonstrate that a workable solution is available that would not mean a further change to the elevation of the building (larger louveres) or adversely affect the amenity of occupiers of rooms above.

I trust this is helpful

Kind regards

Patrick

**Patrick Duffy**  
**Technical Director**  
**Waterman Infrastructure & Environment Ltd**

Pickfords Wharf | Clink Street | London SE1 9DG  
t +44 207 928 7888 | m +44 (0)7467 146622  
[www.watermangroup.com](http://www.watermangroup.com) | [LinkedIn](#) | [Twitter](#)



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We are, as our summary statement indicated, particularly concerned that the proposal represents an intensification or over-development of the site for a single use - hotel - to the extent that its cumulative impacts on and off-site cannot be shown to be manageable without a significant and inappropriate degree of monitoring control. It is difficult to quantify over-development from first principles and the approach we have taken is to seek expert professional reviews of the supplementary information accompanying the application and to assess whether it is sufficiently robust to demonstrate that the proposal can be delivered without unmanageable, harmful impacts. Our own commissioned review of this information has concluded that it cannot.

**Adeline Place servicing**

The proposal provides for on-street vehicle servicing and refuse collection from Adeline Place. We have previously drawn to the attention of the Council that no consideration has been given to the cumulative impact of development off-site, which would normally be expected in the assessment of a proposal of this nature.

The proposal includes no catering facilities but will result in increased traffic to both service the development on-site and to support new or expanded ancillary functions, such as restaurants or cafes, that are developed off-site to meet the new demand. These will include the existing restaurant/café/bars VQ and Hudson's House both of which are ancillary to the St Giles Hotel. There is no consideration of this. VQ is serviced from the side entrance to the St Giles Hotel from Adeline Place.

Nor has consideration been given to the cumulative impact of vehicles servicing the Dominion Theatre, of traffic generation from the St Giles Hotel itself nor from the recently established École Jeannine Manuel at 43-45 Bedford Square. The school has a fleet of five coaches and, in addition to taxis, parents use their own vehicles to pick-up and drop-off pupils during the day. Vehicle access to the school is currently from Bedford Avenue, close to its junction with Adeline Place.

Intensification of servicing and refuse collection, already severe problems, in a manner that would be in contravention of a condition of the planning permission granted for the original development, has

not been adequately addressed.

Servicing of the building that is the subject of this application is restricted by the permission for development (dated 30 September 1975, reference P13/8/A/20545) granted under the Town and Country Planning Act 1971. Condition 5 of the permission states: "No loading or unloading of goods, including fuel, by vehicles arriving at or departing from the premises shall be carried out otherwise than within the curtilage of the building." The reasons for imposition of the condition are given as: "To avoid obstruction of the surrounding streets and to safeguard amenities to adjacent premises". The condition relates to the whole building and is as relevant now as it was then. A similarly worded condition applies to the permission for development granted for the servicing bay of the Dominion Theatre (P9601931R1), which is accessed from Great Russell Street and Adeline Place.

Intensification of service traffic on Adeline Place is already a problem. This has been evidenced by 15m articulated vehicles parked overnight on Great Russell Street and on the diplomatic and disabled parking bays on Adeline Place while loading and unloading. They have also blocked the exit from the public car park beneath the St Giles Hotel causing much disruption. These incidents have been monitored by residents and concerns have been expressed by Councillors over the past five years but the situation has worsened, not improved.

Planning enforcement action has now been instigated by Camden Council for these breaches of planning control under case files EN16/0010 and EN16/0011.

Criterion Capital propose to service the proposed underground hotel from Adeline Place from the same location that the Council is now taking enforcement action against the St Giles Hotel for. The enforcement action confirms that condition 5 of planning permission P13/8/A/20545 would preclude them from doing so and the proposal is not capable of implementation.

When a similarly worded conditions relating to buildings on the same street are ignored for so long, you will appreciate that this gives us no confidence that conditions and planning agreements relating to the planning permission recommended by the Council's Officers concerning servicing the proposed underground hotel beneath the St Giles Hotel from Adeline Place are either practicable or reasonably enforceable without a significant and inappropriate degree of monitoring control. The National Planning Policy Framework requires that a condition should not be imposed if it cannot be enforced. Given the extent of environmental controls required to make this proposal acceptable in theory, we are of the view that such controls would be impracticable and an unreasonable burden for the Council to enforce over the lifetime of the proposal. When there is no realistic prospect of a condition being satisfied then the condition is inappropriate; and it follows that without such a condition the proposal is fundamentally unsafe and should not be granted planning permission.

Furthermore, we are also of the view that by not considering the cumulative effect of development, such as these breaches so dramatically highlight, Officers may be misleading Committee Members when they come to determine that application.

The Bloomsbury Association supports local residents in their objection to this proposal. For the reasons outlined above, we feel that this further demonstrates that the proposal represents an over development of the site for a single use to the extent that its cumulative impacts on and off-site cannot be shown to be manageable. It is our view that the information accompanying the application is unsound and not sufficiently robust to demonstrate that the proposal is achievable without unmanageable, harmful impact.

The grant of planning permission on this basis would be unsafe and inconsistent with the Council's and national planning policies. We therefore urge the Council to refuse the application.

Jim Murray  
Chairman  
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Elizabeth Beaumont, London Borough of Camden

Jacqueline Saunders, London Borough of Camden

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