

Address:	Headland House 308 Gray's Inn Road London WC1X 8DP		11
Application Number:	2015/2939/P	Officer: Jonathan McClue	
Ward:	Kings Cross		
Date Received:	22/05/2015		
Proposal: Change of use to ground floor to a café/restaurant (A3), a ground floor rear extension and the modernisation of the upper floors and frontages of the building.			
Background Papers, Supporting Documents and Drawing Numbers: 0000 Rev B; 0001 Rev B; 0002 Rev B; 0003; 0100 Rev E; 0101 Rev G; 0102 Rev F; 0103 Rev D; 0104 Rev D; 0105 Rev D; 0106 Rev D; 0107 Rev D; 0110 Rev B; 0111 Rev B; 0112 Rev C; 0113 Rev C; 0114 Rev C; 0120 Rev B; 0121; Acoustic Planning Report (project number 1515269) dated 28/05/2015 and Design and Access Statement Rev A dated 22/05/2015.			
RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY: Grant Conditional Permission			
Applicant:		Agent:	
Ms Michells Stanistreet National Union of Journalists Headland House 308-312 Gray's Inn Road London WC1X 8DP		Pascall + Waston The Warehouses 10 Black Friars Lane London EC4V 6ER	

ANALYSIS INFORMATION

Land Use Details:			
	Use Class	Use Description	Floorspace
Existing	<i>B1a Business - Office</i>		1111m ²
Proposed	<i>B1a Business – Office</i>		971m ²
	<i>A3 Restaurants and Cafes</i>		160m ²

Parking Details:		
	Parking Spaces (General)	Parking Spaces (Disabled)
Existing	8	0
Proposed	1	1

OFFICERS' REPORT

Reason for Referral to Committee: This application is reported to the Development Control Committee as it involves the creation of an A3 use [Clause 3(iv)].

1. SITE

- 1.1 This application relates to Headland House on 308-312 Gray's Inn Road, located on the corner with Acton Street. The existing building has a maximum height of 6 storeys (with a basement) fronting Gray's Inn Road, with a rear 3 storey element of the building fronting part of Acton Street. A service entrance is located on Acton Street which leads to an internal courtyard providing parking and servicing to the building.
- 1.2 Headland House is occupied as the head offices (B1a) of the National Union of Journalists (NUJ) who is the trade union representing journalists and journalism, with more than 30,000 members throughout the UK and Ireland. They have been located within the building over several decades and currently sub-let around half of the office space to external tenants.
- 1.3 The existing basement is used as storage and for plant machinery; a reception, library, meeting rooms and offices are located on the ground floor; floors 1-5 are occupied by meeting rooms, conference rooms, offices and training rooms and the building benefits from a roof terrace on the 3rd floor. The reception of the building and main entrance is accessed from Gray's Inn Road. Rear access can be gained from the internal courtyard located behind Acton Street.
- 1.4 The host property is located within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area and the Central London Area. It is noted that it does not form part of a Central London Frontage. The surrounding area contains a mixture of uses with Gray's Inn Road relating to a busy commuter road containing a vast mixture of uses.

2. THE PROPOSAL

Original

- 2.1 Planning permission is sought for the change of use to the ground floor office use (B1a) to a café/restaurant (A3); a ground floor rear extension to form a kitchen; replacement plant equipment on the roof; kitchen extract system; an external lift and platform to the rear; alterations to the façade at ground floor level; cycle and refuse storage and associated works.
- 2.2 The proposed café/restaurant would occupy 160m² of the ground floor and would be managed by the current occupier NUJ. They would use the space as part of their organisation and serve members of the public. The proposed hours of operation are 07:30 to 23:00 Monday to Friday and 11:00 to 23:00 on Saturdays, Sundays and Bank Holidays. The remainder of the ground floor would include a disabled toilet, lift shaft, staircore and a new office reception would be created on the Acton Street frontage.

- 2.3 The ground floor rear extension would have a maximum depth of 4.5m; a width of 6.4m and a flat roof with a height of 5.5m above ground level. It would include a concrete base with a service void; a red matching brick construction and aluminium framed windows. The extension would be located within the internal courtyard to the rear of the building.
- 2.4 The ground floor façade would be renovated to improve its appearance. The alterations include composite resin clad columns; insulated sandwich infill panels; aluminium curtain walling; replacement double glazing; new signage and a new entrance doors constructed of timber.
- 2.5 As part of the proposal the upper floor offices (floors 1- 5) would be modernised. Internal walls would be removed and the layout would be improved to provide more seating and meeting areas. The basement would be converted from storage and plant space into a seminar/event room to be used by the upper floor offices. The proposal would include the removal of internal walls and improvement of the space.

Revisions

- 2.6 The proposal was subject to pre-application discussions under 2014/5847/PRE and 2015/2668/PRE and it was considered acceptable in principle subject to further justification and sufficient details. The original scheme involved the change of use of the basement into an A3 use and a rear terrace for customers. After careful consideration, the basement would now remain in office (B1a) use and be converted from storage and plant rooms to a seminar space. The terrace to the rear is not being pursued.
- 2.7 Revised plans were submitted on 22/06/2015 and 23/06/2015. The main entrance door to the café/restaurant was amended to be inward opening, the internal ramp was replaced with a platform lift and an internal step was following advice from Building Control and Transport Officers. An additional 10 cycle spaces (by way of 5 Sheffield Stands) were included in the rear courtyard and the 2 parking spaces were rearranged. A proposed side section was submitted to show the ground floor rear kitchen extension in more detail.

3. RELEVANT HISTORY

- 3.1 None

4. CONSULTATIONS

Statutory Consultees

- 4.1 *Transport for London (TfL)*: The proposed development lies on a Transport for London Road Network (Gray's Inn Road) and it is not considered that it would be detrimentally affect by the proposal. 13 cycle parking spaces should be secured;

Conservation Area Advisory Committee

- 4.2 *Bloomsbury CAAC*: The CAAC decided to make no comments on the application on 06/06/2015.

Adjoining Occupiers

<i>Number of letters sent</i>	45
<i>Total number of responses received</i>	0
<i>Number in support</i>	0
<i>Number of objections</i>	0

4.4 A site notice was displayed from 29/05/2015 and the planning application was advertised in the local press on 04/06/2015.

5. POLICIES

5.1 LDF Core Strategy and Development Policies

CS1 – Distribution of growth

CS5 – Managing the impact of growth and development

CS7 – Promoting Camden's centres and shops

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

DP12 – Supporting strong centres and managing the impact of food, drink, entertainment and other town centre uses

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

DP21- Development connecting to the highway network

DP24 – Securing high quality design

DP25 – Conserving Camden's heritage

DP26 – Managing the impact of development on occupiers and neighbours

DP27 - Basements and lightwells

DP28 – Noise and vibration

DP30 - Shopfronts

5.2 Supplementary Planning Policies

CPG1 (Design)

CPG2 (Sustainability)

CPG4 (Basements and Lightwells)

CPG5 (Town Centres, Retail and Employment)

CPG6 (Amenity)

CPG7 (Transport)

6. ASSESSMENT

6.1 The principal consideration material to the determination of this application are summarised as follows:

- Land Use;
- Design and Impact on the Bloomsbury Conservation Area;
- Neighbouring Amenity;
- Transport, Access and Servicing;
- Sustainability

Land Use

- 6.2 The application site is occupied as the head offices (B1a) of the National Union of Journalists (NUJ) and they have been there over several decades. The existing office space is outdated and in need of major refurbishment. NUJ want to continue occupying it and get the most out of building practically and as a long-term investment.
- 6.3 The application site is located within the Central London Area and within walking distance of London King's Cross and St Pancras International. It is considered to be in a very attractive and suitable location for office and employment use and any change from this would need to be sufficiently justified. Any application involving the loss of an office use must demonstrate that the site is no longer suitable for its existing business use and that there is evidence that the possibility of retaining, reusing or redeveloping the site for a similar use has been explored appropriately. This criteria is set out in policy DP13 (para 13.3). Paragraph 7.4 of CPG5 gives other considerations regarding the loss of office use.
- 6.4 The proposal would result in the loss of office space on the ground floor of the building. An outline business proposal statement and market assessment has been submitted by the applicant to justify the loss. The current occupier of the building (NUJ) is trying to remain at the property but has found the existing and outdated office space uneconomic to run and inefficient to use. The proposal would result in the loss of 129.8m² of office space on the ground floor which currently includes a working area for 8 staff members, a library, kitchen, and meeting room. The rooms are of poor quality and have an awkward form. Marketing evidence has been submitted to suggest that ground floor office space is generally the least valuable in a building as disruption from traffic noise and passing pedestrians is most prevalent. This applies especially to the application site located on the busy Gray's Inn Road. The evidence states that Letting Agents find that lower floors of office buildings are hardest to let and yield the lowest income. Occupiers often try to use the ground floor for IT functions, storage, toilets and breakout areas as staff are typically not going to be based there on a permanent basis. As part of the proposal, the main reception area to the offices would be relocated within the ground floor. This would protect an element of office use at ground floor level.
- 6.5 It is currently proposed that the ground floor A3 use would be run and operated by NUJ to be used by its staff, visitors and members of the public. It would still serve the employment use on site as it would be used for exhibitions, seminars, events and a place to hold meetings, work and socialise for users of the offices. However the ground floor would be a separate planning unit and is not considered to be ancillary to the main use of the building as an office.

- 6.6 The basement is currently underutilised as it is cluttered by partitions, of poor quality and it contains storage space and plant equipment. It is not considered to contribute any valuable employment space. The proposal includes the renovation of this space, including the removal of the internal partition walls, to create a new seminar and event space for the office use. It would be used as flexible exhibition space, to run workshops and seminars and to host conferences. The new seminar space would bring what is currently a disregarded and unusable basement into a B1a use and would contribute 88.2m² of floor area.
- 6.7 The remaining floors of office are largely outdated and in need of modernisation. As part of the proposal these would be refurbished to upgrade facilities, improve efficiency of occupation and to provide more attractive spaces for NUJ staff and for those sub-letting it. As such the proposed internal refurbishment would free up substantial areas of office space for sub-let, thus increasing office employment within the building overall. In addition to these improvements, the existing third floor terrace would be improved creating a more attractive and enjoyable space for the benefit of staff, tenants and visitors. The table below shows a breakdown of the existing and proposed office workers on each floor. Overall, there would be a large increase in the number of desk and meeting spaces.

	Existing		Proposed	
	Desks	Meeting	Desks	Meeting
Lower Ground	0	0	0	72
Ground	8	16	1	0
1st	11	12	27	8
2nd	16	0	27	8
3rd	14	0	16	8
4th	9	4	16	8
5th	0	61	16	8
	58	93	102	112
	151		214	

Above: Table showing the breakdown of office occupancy existing and proposed.

- 6.8 On the basis of the above, it is considered that the proposed loss of office floorspace would be acceptable in this instance due to the amount and type of space lost, the proposed use on the ground floor that would still contribute to the employment use and the improvement of the space on the other floors which would provide more employment space overall.
- 6.9 Turning to the proposed A3 use, policy CS7 seeks to protect and enhance Camden's centres; provide a range of shops, services, food, drink and entertainment uses and make sure that food, drink and entertainment uses do not have a harmful impact on residents and the local area. This is supported by policy DP12 which aims to support strong centres and manage the impact of food, drink and other town centre uses. Development should not cause harm to the character, function and vitality of a centre.

- 6.10 Given the proposal's accessible location within a mixture of commercial uses, it is considered that the café/restaurant use would be acceptable in principle. The proposed use would add to the range of uses within the Central London Area without resulting in a concentration of the development type. Furthermore, the existing ground floor office space does very little for the streetscape and the ground floor external appearance is currently adding little value. The ground floor café/restaurant use would provide a more active frontage. A further assessment on the suitability of the A3 is contained within Neighbouring Amenity (paragraphs 6.15-6.17) below.

Design and Impact on the Bloomsbury Conservation Area

- 6.11 The proposal includes a number of external changes including alterations to the front and side elevations at ground floor level; a new entrance on Acton Street; elevation; a ground floor rear extension and the installation of plant equipment at roof level. Each of these will be assessed separately in the paragraphs below.
- 6.12 The front (on Gray's Inn Road) and side (on Acton Street) elevations offer little by way of interest or merit at street level and the proposal is seeking to improve this. Modern facing materials and glazing would be used to improve the appearance of the host building and make a more active street frontage. Overall, the alterations would enhance the character and appearance of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area.
- 6.13 The rear kitchen extension would include a concrete base housing a service void, kitchen plant equipment in the ceiling to be supported within a metal frame, an access ladder to its roof with a 1.1m safety rail and it would be constructed of red brick to match the existing building. In relation to the host building it is considered subservient by way of its height, width, depth and size. The proposed extension would be located within the internal servicing yard and it would not be visible from within the public realm. It is considered that the proposal would preserve the character and appearance of the conservation area.
- 6.14 The proposed plant equipment on the roof would replace existing equipment in the same location and it would be of a similar size and height. Due to this and the setback of the proposed plant equipment from the parapets of the building, it is considered that the proposal would not harm appearance of the host building and that it would preserve the character and appearance of the conservation area.

Neighbouring Amenity

- 6.15 The closest residential occupiers are located within the upper floors of the adjacent building at 70 Acton Street. Other residential flats are located on this street at upper levels. To the front of the building, the nearest residential accommodation is the upper level flats at 243 Gray's Inn Road located 18m away. The other surrounding uses are predominantly commercial. Due to the scale, location, and nature of the extensions proposed and their setback from neighbouring buildings which have blank gables, it is not considered that they would cause any amenity concerns to the adjacent commercial or residential occupiers.

- 6.16 Due to the location of the proposal within the Central London Area on a busy and noisy commuter road, Gray's Inn Road, and the wide variety of commercial uses present within the surrounding area, the proposal would not result in an unacceptable level of disturbance to nearby residents by way of noise or general disturbance associated with the restaurant use. The proposed hours of 07:30 to 23:00 Mondays to Fridays and 11:00 to 23:00 on Saturdays, Sundays and Bank Holidays are considered appropriate and they would be compatible with other food, drink and entertainment activities within the locality. Conditions are recommended to ensure control through the planning permission including hours of operation and the use of music.
- 6.17 The proposed refurbishments are to include the addition of new plant both indoors and outdoors. The outdoor plant comprises of 3 heating and cooling units on the fifth floor roof. The indoor plant proposals include 4 heat exchange units, kitchen extract and supply fans, and 7 toilet extract fans. These include air inlets and exhausts at various points at the rear of the building. A noise report has been submitted with the application. The assessment included a site visit, ambient noise monitoring and calculations of the plant noise. The report concluded that with the inclusion of the mitigation methods the plant noise limits would meet the criteria within Policy DP28. The Council's Noise Officer has assessed the acoustic information and is satisfied that the proposal would not result in any undue harm to the neighbouring occupiers. This is subject to a condition requiring the submitted noise criteria being implemented and permanently retained. On this basis, it is not considered that the proposed plant machinery would result in a material level of harm by way of noise or general disturbance to the surrounding residential occupiers.

Transport, Access and Servicing

- 6.18 The site currently has 8 off-street parking spaces within the rear service yard accessed from Acton Street. The proposed rear ground floor café/restaurant kitchen extension and the provision of a platform lift for disabled staff and visitors results in the loss of 6 car parking spaces and this is welcomed by Transport Officers (2 would remain, 1 being a disabled space). As the proposed development does not comprise any residential uses and the site is located south of the Euston Road, where it is very difficult to obtain business parking permits, it is considered that it is unnecessary to secure the building as being car capped.
- 6.19 15 cycle parking spaces are provided within the rear service yard. 5 are provided within a small enclosed cycle store using semi vertical hangers and another 10 through 5 Sheffield Stands. This is considered acceptable for the proposed office and café/restaurant uses.
- 6.20 The site is currently serviced off-street from the rear service yard and from an on-street loading bay located to the east of the site on Acton Street. The on-street loading bay can be used for periods of up to 20 minutes at any time of the day except between 7am and 10am and 4pm and 7pm Monday to Saturday. The rear service yard is too small for large vehicles to turn around in so it is assumed that service vehicles either reverse in and exit in forward gear, or drive in forwards and then reverse out (although the latter is not recommended on safety grounds).

Refuse and recycling collection currently takes place from the street, with the refuse brought out from within the yard, where it is stored, for collection. Whilst the proposals will lead to a reduction in the size of the service yard, it is considered that this will not materially change the use of the yard from the current situation. Deliveries will continue to take place from either within the yard or the nearby loading bay, whilst refuse and recycling collection will continue as per the existing arrangement. As the proposals would only lead to a small increase in the servicing requirements of the site it is considered that a Servicing Management Plan is unnecessary in this instance.

- 6.21 As the proposals only comprise a small ground floor extension, changes to the ground floor façade and an internal refit of the building, it is considered that a Construction Management Plan is unnecessary in this instance.

Sustainability

- 6.22 As only 20m² of new floorspace is proposed and less than 500m² would be subject to the change of use, there would not be a mandatory requirement for a sustainability statement or any obligations in relation to BREEAM. The Design and Access Statement makes reference to the internal renovation of the building resulting in greater energy efficiency and this is encouraged.

7. CONCLUSION

- 7.1 Overall, the proposed development is considered acceptable. While there would be a loss to some of the ground floor office space, the creation of a seminar room in the basement and the upgrading of the upper floors would mean that there would be an overall gain in the amount of office employment space provided. Based on the location of the proposal and the nature of the surrounding development the principle of the A3 use is acceptable. Pursuant to the recommended conditions being adhered to, the café/restaurant use would be compatible within the surrounding area and would not be likely to result in any material impacts on neighbouring occupiers. The proposed external alterations are considered to be compatible with the host and surrounding buildings and they would not materially harm the character or appearance of the surrounding area.
- 7.2 The proposed development would be appropriate and in accordance with relevant National and Regional Policy, Core Strategy and Development policies and Camden Planning Guidance for the reasons noted above.
- 7.3 Planning Permission is recommended subject to the following conditions listed within section 8 below.

8. LEGAL COMMENTS

- 8.1 Members are referred to the note from the Legal Division at the start of the Agenda.

Condition(s) and Reason(s):

- 1 The development hereby permitted must be begun not later than the end of three

years from the date of this permission.

Reason: In order to comply with the provisions of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

- 2 All new external work shall be carried out in materials that resemble, as closely as possible, in colour and texture those of the existing building, unless otherwise specified in the approved application.

Reason: To safeguard the appearance of the premises and the character of the immediate area in accordance with the requirements of policy CS14 of the London Borough of Camden Local Development Framework Core Strategy and policy DP24 and DP25 of the London Borough of Camden Local Development Framework Development Policies.

- 3 The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans 0000 Rev B; 0001 Rev B; 0002 Rev B; 0003; 0100 Rev E; 0101 Rev G; 0102 Rev F; 0103 Rev D; 0104 Rev D; 0105 Rev D; 0106 Rev D; 0107 Rev D; 0110 Rev B; 0111 Rev B; 0112 Rev C; 0113 Rev C; 0114 Rev C; 0120 Rev B; 0121; Acoustic Planning Report (project number 1515269) dated 28/05/2015 and Design and Access Statement Rev A dated 22/05/2015.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interest of proper planning.

- 4 The use hereby permitted shall not be carried out outside the following times 07:30 to 23:00 Mondays to Fridays and 11:00 to 23:00 on Saturdays, Sundays and Bank Holidays.

Reason: To safeguard the amenities of the adjoining premises and the area generally in accordance with the requirements of policies CS5 and CS7 of the London Borough of Camden Local Development Framework Core Strategy and policy DP26, DP28 and DP12 of the London Borough of Camden Local Development Framework Development Policies.

- 5 No music shall be played on the premises in such a way as to be audible within any adjoining premises or on the adjoining highway.

Reason: To safeguard the amenities of the adjoining premises and the area generally in accordance with the requirements of policies CS5 and CS7 of the London Borough of Camden Local Development Framework Core Strategy and policy DP26 and DP12 of the London Borough of Camden Local Development Framework Development Policies.

- 6 The installation of plant equipment is to be carried out with regard to the noise criteria set out in the applicant's 'Acoustic Planning Report ref: 1515269' dated 28/05/2015 and additional steps to mitigate noise shall be taken as necessary. The measures shall ensure that the external noise level emitted from plant equipment will be lower than the lowest existing background noise level by at least 5dBA, by 10dBA where the source is tonal as assessed according to BS4142:1997 at the

nearest and/or most affected noise sensitive premises, with all machinery operating at maximum capacity. Approved details shall be implemented prior to commissioning of the development and thereafter be permanently retained.

Reason: To ensure that the amenity of occupiers of the development site & surrounding premises is not adversely affected by noise from plant equipment.

Informative(s):

- 1 Your proposals may be subject to control under the Building Regulations and/or the London Buildings Acts which cover aspects including fire and emergency escape, access and facilities for people with disabilities and sound insulation between dwellings. You are advised to consult the Council's Building Control Service, Camden Town Hall, Argyle Street WC1H 8EQ, (tel: 020-7974 6941).
- 2 Noise from demolition and construction works is subject to control under the Control of Pollution Act 1974. You must carry out any building works that can be heard at the boundary of the site only between 08.00 and 18.00 hours Monday to Friday and 08.00 to 13.00 on Saturday and not at all on Sundays and Public Holidays. You are advised to consult the Council's Compliance and Enforcement team [Regulatory Services], Camden Town Hall, Argyle Street, WC1H 8EQ (Tel. No. 020 7974 4444 or on the website <http://www.camden.gov.uk/ccm/content/contacts/council-contacts/environment/contact-the-environmental-health-team.en> or seek prior approval under Section 61 of the Act if you anticipate any difficulty in carrying out construction other than within the hours stated above.