

**From:** Stephen Heath [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 01 March 2016 13:18  
**To:** Diver, John  
**Cc:** [REDACTED] Bloomsbury Association  
**Subject:** APPLICATION FOR PLANNING PERMISSION 2015/6593/P

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

John

We have reviewed the revised drawings submitted and they are a slight improvement. However we are still concerned that modifications to only one of the mews buildings is being proposed that is potentially damaging to the mews as a whole, both in terms of pattern of use and appearance. As we stated before, Gower Mews is unique in that it is in one ownership and that each mews house is identical in appearance. They may not fall within the curtilage of the listed buildings facing the Square but they are in the Bloomsbury Conservation Area and have group value. We might be more supportive of a comprehensive approach to the use of all Bedford Estates' garages on Gower Mews but not a one off proposal such as this. Our objection still stands.

We should point out that these comments are made on behalf of the Bloomsbury Association, not the Bloomsbury Conservation Advisory Committee. We suggest that the Council seeks the views of the BCAAC before determining the application.

Regards,

Stephen Heath  
**Bloomsbury Association**

On 29 Feb 2016, at 10:55, Diver, John wrote:

Dear Stephen,

Thank you for the comments sent across on behalf of the Bloomsbury CAAC last week in relation to 12 Gower Mews.

I would just like to update you on the assessment for the application:  
Revisions have been made to the scheme which means that the existing doors are to be retained. Due to this amendment to the design we are now mindful to approve the scheme however this decision will be made by members during a members briefing.  
I would also like to take the opportunity to inform you that after investigating the matter, it was found that the application property is not listed or within the curtilage of

the listed buildings along Bedford Square. Some evidence of the status of the property has been uploaded to the case file, alongside the revisions to the scheme.

If you would like to submit further comments or alter you previous comments, please let me know.

Many thanks,

**John Diver**

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**From:** Bloomsbury Association [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 22 February 2016 23:45  
**To:** Planning [REDACTED]  
**Cc:** Diver, John [REDACTED] Bloomsbury Association  
**Subject:** APPL [REDACTED] PERMISSION 2015/6593/P

**12 GOWER MEWS, LONDON WC1E 6HP**  
CONVERSION OF GROUND FLOOR GARAGE INTO HABITABLE ROOM &  
ASSOCIATED ALTERATIONS TO FRONT ELEVATION. INTERNAL  
ALTERATIONS.

Application for planning permission: 2015/6593/P

The Bloomsbury Association objects to this application.

Ordinarily we would support applications for change of use from commercial to residential use in this location, providing the proposal resulted in a real addition to housing stock and not a short-term holiday rental. However we are mindful that Bedford Square is unique. It is acknowledged as one of the best preserved set pieces of Georgian architecture in London and in 2000, with substantial funding from Bedford Estate, English Heritage and the London Borough of Camden, its public realm underwent careful refurbishment to reflect the asset value of its heritage. Its buildings are Grade I listed and English Heritage defines Grade I buildings as being 'of exceptional interest, sometimes considered to be internationally important'.

Gower Mews is part of the grade I listed buildings and is also unique in that it is the sole surviving mews to Bedford Square. The mews on the other three sides of the Square have all been lost through subsequent redevelopment. When I worked in these buildings they were all in either garage or storage use at mews level and most were in quasi residential use on the upper floors, which is the traditional arrangement. They all still retain their original doors, which again in Bloomsbury, if not London, is unique.

The broad principles established in national policy and guidance on the historic environment are reflected in the London Plan. Policy 4B.12 seeks to ensure that the protection and enhancement of historic assets in London is based on an understanding of their special character, and form part of the wider design and urban improvement agenda. This recognises that asset value is more than the fabric of the Square's buildings but in the spatial quality of the space that they define and the approaches to and from it. The proposed ground floor doors and windows will appear incongruous on entering the mews from Gower Street and will detract from the group setting. These are not characteristics that are compatible with a policy that seeks to protect these values, nor are they consistent with the design principles for Bedford Square contained in the Bloomsbury and Fitzrovia Area Action Plan.

Policy DP25 states that the Council will "only permit development within conservation areas that preserves and enhances the character and appearance of the area" and will "not permit development that it considers would cause harm to the setting of a listed building". This proposal fails to satisfy on both counts.

We might be more supportive of a comprehensive approach to the use of all the Estates' garages on Gower Mews but not a one off proposal such as this. We encourage continued residential use of the upper floors.

Stephen Heath  
**Bloomsbury Association**