
Statement of case

6 Coptic Street, London, WC1A 1NH



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1. Introduction

- 1.1. This statement has been written on behalf of the Appellants, City Investment Properties Ltd, to support an appeal against the Local Planning Authorities (LPA) decision to refuse planning permission for a development at 6 Coptic Street, London, WC1A 1NH.
- 1.2. The planning application (ref no: 2016/0321/P) proposed the following development:
- Erection of two storey rear extension and mansard roof extension with associated fenestration alterations.*
- 1.3. A full assessment of the proposal in the context of relevant policies and other material considerations was provided within the planning statement which accompanied the application. This statement is an addendum to the previous planning statement and should be read in conjunction with that report, as well as the other reports and documentation that accompanied the application including:
- Location, existing and proposed drawings prepared by HUT Architects;
 - Heritage Statement prepared by Turley;
 - BRE Daylight and Sunlight studies prepared by Rights of Light Consulting.
- 1.4. This statement provides a direct response to the local planning authority's (LPA) reasons for refusal as set out on the decision notices and in the LPA's delegated report.
- 1.5. This statement continues under the following sections:
- **Section 2** sets out the background to the proposed development and subsequent appeal;
 - **Section 3** summarises the matters that are not in dispute;
 - **Section 4** outlines the planning policy framework applicable to the appeal;
 - **Section 5** sets out the reasons for refusal;
 - **Section 6** describes the site and surroundings;
 - **Section 7** describes the proposal and highlights how the proposal has evolved in response to previous planning history;
 - **Section 8** provides a response to the LPA's reasons for refusal and consolidates the justification for the development.
 - **Section 9** sets out the conclusions.
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- **Appendix 1** LPA case officer's report relating to planning application 2013/5970/P;
 - **Appendix 2** Inspector's report relating to planning application 8800404.

2. Background to the appeal

2.1. The planning application (ref no: 2016/0321/P) follows several previous applications and appeals relating to similar proposals at the application site. The most relevant are as follows:

- A planning application (ref no: 2013/5970/P) for the 'erection of two storey rear extension and mansard roof extension' was recommended for approval by the LPA's planning officers, but was refused at the LPA's planning committee on 8 April 2014. The planning committee decision followed several neighbour objections which were submitted during the application. Relevant parts of this application are referred to throughout this appeal statement.

The officer's report relating to the previous planning application (ref no: 2013/5970/P) which includes supportive comments has been attached as an appendix to this appeal statement (appendix 1).

- A planning application (ref no: 8800404) and subsequent appeal (ref no: T/APP/X5210/A/88/108145/P4) for a 'rear extension (fronting Stedham Place) at first and second floor levels for office use' was refused by the Council and subsequently dismissed on appeal. This proposal was for a full width extension across both first and second floor levels. Relevant parts of this application and appeal are referred to throughout this appeal statement.

The Inspector's report relating to the appeal (ref no: T/APP/X5210/A/88/108145/P4) has been attached as an appendix to this appeal statement (appendix 2).

2.2. The planning application (ref no: 2016/0321/P) sought to respond to and resolve the issues that the Inspector raised as a part of the previous appeal (ref no: T/APP/X5210/A/88/108145/P4) and the issues identified by the LPA's planning committee, and neighbour comments, as a part of the planning application (ref no: 2013/5970/P). The planning application was also brought forward on the basis of the LPA's planning assessment which determined that the proposals were acceptable and in compliance with the LPA's planning policy.

2.3. Given the nature of the reasons for refusal attached to the planning application (ref no: 2013/5970/P), a heritage consultant was appointed to provide heritage advice prior to the development of the scheme submitted to the LPA. Based on the findings of the initial heritage assessment (the proposal would not result in harm to the relevant heritage asset (conservation area) and in fact would result in heritage benefits), the scheme was developed and submitted as a planning application to the LPA.

2.4. The planning statement submitted with the application (ref no: 2016/0321/P) sets out how the subject proposal responded to the previous reasons for refusal (ref no: 2013/5970/P) and the comments submitted by neighbours during the planning process (a summary is provided within section 7 of this statement). This was a key consideration during the development of the scheme.

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- 2.5. During the assessment of the application (ref no: 2016/0321/P) the LPA raised question as to the validity of the submitted BRE daylight and sunlight report. Several iterations of the BRE daylight and sunlight report were submitted during the assessment of the application in response to the LPA's concerns and several corrections were made within this report. The correct and relevant report is dated 18 May 2016.
- 2.6. Despite the views of the previous planning officer as set out in the committee report (forming appendix 1 of this statement of case) (ref no: 2013/5970/P) which provided justification for the proposed rear and roof extensions, the submission of a heritage statement, and clarifying the validity of the BRE daylight and sunlight report, the LPA refused the planning application on the following grounds:

The proposed rear extension, by reason of its bulk, mass and terminating height would result in harm to the character and appearance of the host building and of this part of the Bloomsbury conservation area, contrary to policy CS14 (Promoting high quality places and conserving our heritage) of the London Borough of Camden Local Development Framework Core Strategy and policies DP24 (Securing high quality design) and DP25 (Conserving Camden's heritage) of the London Borough of Camden Local Development Framework Development Policies.

The proposed roof extension, by reason of its design, form, bulk, location in a pair of buildings unimpaired by later additions and removal of original roof form would result in harm to the character and appearance of the host building, the pair of buildings of which it forms part and of this part of the Bloomsbury conservation area, contrary to policy CS14 (Promoting high quality places and conserving our heritage) of the London Borough of Camden Local Development Framework Core Strategy and policies DP24 (Securing high quality design) and DP25 (Conserving Camden's heritage) of the London Borough of Camden Local Development Framework Development Policies.

The proposed rear closet wing extension by reason of its height and location would result in a loss of amenity to neighbouring occupiers by virtue of the impact on sunlight, daylight and sense of enclosure to the adjoining roof terrace and windows at 5 and 7 Coptic Street, contrary to policy CS5 (Managing the impact of growth and development) the London Borough of Camden Local Development Framework Core Strategy; and Policy DP26 (Managing the impact of development on occupiers and neighbours) of the London Borough of Camden Local Development Framework Development Policies.

- 2.7. Although changes were made to the scheme (ref no: 2016/0321/P) resulting in an amended proposal (ref no: 2016/0321/P), particularly the reduction in scale of the rear extensions, the reasons for refusal are identical to those given by the planning committee (ref no: 2013/5970/P).
- 2.8. This appeal is being submitted in response to the LPA's decision to refuse the planning application (ref no: 2016/0321/P) as the proposal is considered to comply with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the LPA's 'Development Plan' and their supporting planning documents.

3. Matters not in dispute

3.1. Based on the reasons for refusal and the LPA's delegated report, it is considered that the following matters are not in dispute:

- The proposed land use is acceptable. Paragraph 3.48 of the LPA's delegated report states '*new and refurbished office floorspace is supported.*'
- The proposal is acceptable in terms of privacy and overlooking. Paragraphs 3.40 to 3.45 in the LPA's delegated report address privacy and overlooking.
- The proposal is acceptable in transport and highways terms. Paragraph 3.47 states '*the proposal would not result in a significant intensification of use and associated traffic generation/congestion.*'

4. Policy planning framework

4.1. The following national and local planning policies are relevant to the appeal.

National Planning Policy Framework

4.2. The National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012) (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and is a material consideration in determining planning applications.

4.3. At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 14). It also states, at paragraph 17, that planning should proactively drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver the homes, businesses and industrial units, infrastructure and thriving local places that the country needs. High quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings should be sought.

4.4. With regard to decision-taking, the NPPF advises that local planning authorities should approach decision-taking in a positive way to foster the delivery of sustainable development and should look for solutions rather than problems. Decision-takers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible (paragraphs 186 and 187).

4.5. The following core planning principles of the NPPF are considered relevant to the proposal:

- Core planning principle – planning should not simply be about scrutiny, but instead be a creative exercise in finding ways to enhance and improve the places in which people live their lives.
- Core planning principle – planning should conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations.

4.6. The following paragraphs of the NPPF are considered relevant to the proposal:

- Paragraph 128 – the significance of the identified heritage asset, and the contribution of the application building which will be affected by development proposals should be fully described.
- Paragraph 131 – in determining planning applications, local planning authorities should take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation.
- Paragraph 132 – when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. As heritage assets are irreplaceable, any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification. ,
- Paragraph 134 – where a proposed development will lead to less than substantial harm, to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum use.

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- Paragraph 137 – local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation areas and World Heritage Sites and within the setting of heritage assets to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to or better reveal the significance of the asset should be treated favourably.
- Paragraph 140 – local planning authorities should assess whether the benefits of a proposal for enabling development, which would otherwise conflict with planning policies but which would secure the future conservation of a heritage asset, outweigh the disbenefits of departing from those policies.

Local Planning Policy

- 4.7. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that planning applications must be determined in accordance with the development plan for the area unless any material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 4.8. For the purposes of S. 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, the 'Development Plan' comprises the:
- London Plan;
 - London Borough of Camden Local Development Framework Core Strategy;
 - London Borough of Camden Local Development Framework Development Policies.
- 4.9. The following documents are also relevant to the proposal:
- Bloomsbury Conservation area Statement/Bloomsbury Conservation area Appraisal & Management Strategy (2011);
 - Camden Planning Guidance SPD.
- 4.10. Camden's key policy documents which are relevant to the appeal are listed below:
- Policy CS5 – Managing the impact of growth and development of the London Borough of Camden Local Development Framework Core Strategy;
 - Policy CS14 – Promoting high quality places and conserving our heritage of the London Borough of Camden Local Development Framework Core Strategy;
 - Policy DP24 – Securing high quality design of the London Borough of Camden Local Development Framework Development Policies;
 - Policy DP25 – Conserving Camden's heritage of the London Borough of Camden Local Development Framework Development Policies;
 - DP26 – Managing the impact of development on occupiers and neighbours of the London Borough of Camden Local Development Framework Development Policies.

5. Reasons for refusal

5.1. The reasons for refusal as set out on the LPA's decision notice, as well as corresponding points in the LPA's report are set out below.

Reason for refusal 1

The proposed rear extension, by reason of its bulk, mass and terminating height would result in harm to the character and appearance of the host building and of this part of the Bloomsbury conservation area, contrary to policy CS14 (Promoting high quality places and conserving our heritage) of the London Borough of Camden Local Development Framework Core Strategy and policies DP24 (Securing high quality design) and DP25 (Conserving Camden's heritage) of the London Borough of Camden Local Development Framework Development Policies.

5.2. The LPA's comments in relation to reason for refusal 1 are noted below:

- Stedham Place is accessed via a controlled gate used solely by the occupier's properties of Stedham Place and Stedham Chambers.
- Whilst the rear elevation of 7 to 10 Coptic Street is obstructed from view, there is no obstruction to the rear of 5 (with the exception of a rear extension) and 6 Coptic Street. 6 Coptic Street is visible from public view.
- The issue of a rear extension was addressed as a part of a previous appeal (ref no. 8800404).
- Rear extensions (CPG1) should be designed to be secondary to the building, respect and preserve the original design and proportions of the building, not cause a loss of amenity, retain the open character of existing natural landscaping and garden amenity.
- Extensions which are higher than one full storey below roof eaves/parapet level or that rise above the general height of neighbouring projections will be strongly discouraged.
- The proposal would result in a substantial built element projecting from the rear of the host building, disrupting the current simplicity of the buildings rear elevation that is an intrinsic characteristic of the wider estate.
- The rear extension would appear bulky and out of character with the host building.
- The rear extension would be largely unnoticed in the majority of public views and the effect on the townscape would not be as apparent as a change to the front of the property.

Reason for refusal 2

The proposed roof extension, by reason of its design, form, bulk, location in a pair of buildings unimpaired by later additions and removal of original roof form would result in harm to the character and appearance of the host building, the pair of buildings of which it forms part and of this part of the Bloomsbury conservation area, contrary to policy CS14 (Promoting high quality places and conserving our heritage) of the London Borough of Camden Local Development Framework Core Strategy and policies DP24 (Securing high quality design) and DP25 (Conserving Camden's heritage) of the London Borough of Camden Local Development Framework Development Policies.

5.3. The LPA's comments in relation to reason for refusal 2 are noted below:

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- The site/building forms part of six buildings along the west side of Coptic Street which are separated into two distinct groups – 7 to 10 Coptic Street and 5 and 6 Coptic Street.
- Inappropriate extensions will be resisted (Bloomsbury Conservation area Appraisal and Management Strategy), particularly where these interrupt the consistency of a uniform terrace or the prevailing scale and character of a block, or are overly prominent in the street.
- Roof alterations or additions (CPG1) are unacceptable where they have an adverse affect upon the skyline and the appearance of the building or surrounding streetscape.
- The proposed mansard would sit within a 'group' that has an established roof form – one which terminates consistently at parapet level. A roof form projecting above parapet level would unacceptably detract from the existing roofscape, the overall host building and group of buildings.
- The roof form would be higher and inconsistent with 5 Coptic Street and 7 to 10 Coptic Street.

Reason for refusal 3

The proposed rear closet wing extension by reason of its height and location would result in a loss of amenity to neighbouring occupiers by virtue of the impact on sunlight, daylight and sense of enclosure to the adjoining roof terrace and windows at 5 and 7 Coptic Street, contrary to policy CS5 (Managing the impact of growth and development) the London Borough of Camden Local Development Framework Core Strategy; and Policy DP26 (Managing the impact of development on occupiers and neighbours) of the London Borough of Camden Local Development Framework Development Policies.

5.4. The LPA's comments in relation to reason for refusal 2 are noted below:

- The issue of amenity was addressed as a part of a previous appeal (ref no. 8800404) and planning application (ref no: 2013/5970/P).
- The current proposal reduces the width of the extension and creates a chamfered edge.
- Sunlight and daylight reports submitted as a part of the previous application (ref no: 2013/5970/P) and the current application have been considered.
- The Council has noted the error identified by the applicant, but maintains concerns regarding the level of impact on sunlight and daylight to the adjoining properties.
- While the rear extension would be reduced in width and feature a chamfered element, the height and essential massing would remain for all intents purposes, particularly when viewed from the residential windows of 7 Coptic Street.
- The increase in height means that the proposed extension would have overbearing of not overwhelming visual impact, dominating the outlook from the adjoining property.
- The extension would result in a significantly diminished outlook which would result in a harmful sense of enclosure.

6. Site and surroundings

- 6.1. A full description of the site is provided within the planning statement that was submitted as a part of the planning application. The following information relates specifically to the reasons for refusal.
- 6.2. The application site lies on the western side of Coptic Street, within the London Borough of Camden. The site contains a 4 storey (plus basement) building which was constructed in the 19th century and was originally built as a townhouse.
- 6.3. The building is of brick construction and has an M-shape roof form with a central and lateral valley gutter (limited from public view by the parapet). The building features a single storey ground floor extension at the rear and a projecting closet wing on the south side of the building at first floor level.
- 6.4. The building forms part of a wider terrace which includes 5 to 10 Coptic Street. There is a differentiation in building elements along this terrace including fenestration alignment, parapet line, terminating height, number of internal storeys and roof form.
- 6.5. The planning designations for the site include:
 - Bloomsbury Conservation area (sub area 7 – Museum Street/Great Russell Street).
 - The site is identified as a building which adds special interest to the Conservation area (along with 5, 7, 8, 9 and 10 Coptic Street);
 - Central London Area;
 - Archaeological Area.
- 6.6. The site is not statutorily listed.
- 6.7. The accompanying Heritage Statement (section 3) provides a full description of the significance of the Conservation area (heritage asset) and the contribution of the subject building to this heritage asset (in accordance with paragraph 128 of the NPPF).

7. Proposal

- 7.1. The aim of the proposed development is to bring the existing building back into active use by providing enhanced and logically laid out office floorspace.
- 7.2. This is to be achieved by:
- replacing the existing rear closet wing with a half width, two storey extension;
 - the existing attic floor is to be bricked at the rear with new windows;
 - construction of a mansard roof extension above to create one additional level of office accommodation;
 - minor internal reconfiguration to improve the quality of the internal working environment.
- 7.3. The proposal would also improve the quality and appearance of the existing building by replacing the existing unsympathetic metal casement windows on the street elevation with a traditional timber framed sash window. The rear ground floor openings would also be replaced with new openings to improve the buildings appearance to Stedham Place.
- 7.4. As previously set out, the planning application sought to respond to and resolve the issues raised by the Inspector (ref no: 8800404), the planning committee which refused the previous planning application (ref no: 2013/5970/P), as well as the comments received from neighbours during the application's consultation period.
- 7.5. The proposal has changed considerably from the appeal scheme (ref no. 8800404). The appeal scheme proposed a full width, two storey (first and second floors) extension. It also proposed windows which were out of character with the Georgian character of the wider terrace.
- 7.6. The current proposal (ref no: 2016/0321/P) greatly refines the previous scheme (ref no: 2013/5970/P), taking care to propose sensitive changes to the existing building, using high quality materials and details. The following changes were made to the planning application to respond to these concerns:
- All new windows to be traditional timber framed sash windows.
 - The existing front ground floor level window is replaced with a traditional timber framed sash window.
 - The existing rear ground floor level windows are replaced with sympathetic windows.
 - The width of the rear extension is reduced to ensure that the extension is subordinate and secondary to the main building. The reduction in the width of the extension also minimises the impact on the adjoining properties.
 - The rear extension has also been chamfered to minimise the amenity impact on the adjoining property at 7 Coptic Street. The chamfer also reduces the appearance of bulk when viewed from the rear.
 - The proportions of the rear elevation have been revised to ensure that the mansard is subordinate to the existing building.
 - The rear fenestration pattern has been reordered, in terms of positioning and hierarchy, to provide a more legible rear elevation.

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- 7.7. It is noted that during the previous planning application (ref no: 2013/5970/P) 16 responses were received (12 objecting to the proposal). During the subject planning application (ref no: 2016/0321/P), only 5 objections were received.
- 7.8. As previously set out, the LPA's planning officer recommended the application (ref no: 2013/5970/P) for approval, concluding that the previous proposal complied with National and Local planning policies. Their conclusion is set out below:

The proposed alterations and extensions to no.6 Coptic Street are considered to retain the intrinsic character and appearance whilst adding accommodation to the building. The rear and roof extension have comply with Camden guidance and would be subordinate to and not overbearing on the building and surrounding properties. The proposal; not exert a materially harmful impact on the amenities of adjoining occupiers, in terms of privacy, overlooking, outlook or sense of enclosure.

Planning Permission is recommended for approval.

- 7.9. The assessment by the LPA's planning officer (ref no: 2013/5970/P) is also noted:

Reason for refusal 1

- 6.22: With regard to 'overdevelopment', it is considered the erection of a half width, half depth closet wing extension, aligning with the existing extension at No.5 would be an appropriate form of development in this context, whilst a full width full depth extension, as per the appeal, would not be appropriate.
- 6.22: The extension would comply with Camden guidance which states that rear extension should be one storey below eaves (parapet) level and "in cases where a higher extension is appropriate, a smaller footprint will generally be preferable to compensate for any increase in visual mass".
- 6.23: this proposal would seek an appropriately 'slim' (half width) closet wing extension. Although it would rise 2m above the adjacent rear extension of No.5, it would be set back appropriately from Stedham Place, remain one full storey below roof level and maintain a vertical emphasis, more sympathetic to the character of the building.
- 6.25: The proposed roof, rear extension and associated elevation alterations in respect of size, scale and materials proposed is considered appropriate to the character and appearance of the main building.

Reason for refusal 2

- 6.8: The scale varies along the terrace allowing for a roof extension to be built on the lower setting of Nos. 6. This would maintain the existing parapet height with No.5 and mediate between the taller buildings at No.7-10 (cons), thereby preserving the current arrangement.
- 6.10: The relative change in terminating heights along this side of Coptic Street would suitably accommodate the mansard roof extension. the terminating height would be significantly concealed by the higher flank wall and chimney stack of No.7 and chimney stack at No.5.

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- 6.11: The proposed scheme is considered to retain the intrinsic character and appearance whilst adding accommodation to the building. Whilst the mansard roof would add a visible roof addition (mainly at upper floor level - 4th floor upwards), the mansard and dormer windows have been designed to relate to the architectural style and proportions of the Victorian façade below and in this instance is deemed an appropriate form of extension at this level and within the Bloomsbury Conservation area.

Reason for refusal 3

- 6.35: With particular regard to Nos. 3 Stedham Place and 7 Coptic Street, the applicant's sunlight/daylight report also demonstrate the rear extension would not exert any material harm upon any habitable window, in terms of VSC and sunlight to daylight. Whilst the report notes that 3 windows, namely a rooflight above to the ground floor level extension and flank window at first floor level to No.7 Coptic and a rear facing window at second floor level to 3 Stedham Place would result in a loss, it is either marginal or to a secondary window serving a room. Given the proposal would not exert any material harm upon any habitable window on the immediate neighbour of No.7 Coptic street, this is also considered to be the case for No.8, 9 and 10 Coptic Street, given their proximity from the development. Whilst there would be an impact upon daylight to the adjoining terrace of No.3 Stedham Place, the impact would not substantiate a reason for refusal on this issue alone.

8. Response to the Council's reasons for refusal

8.1. The following section sets out the Appellants response to the LPA's reasons for refusal.

Reason for refusal 1

The proposed rear extension, by reason of its bulk, mass and terminating height would result in harm to the character and appearance of the host building and of this part of the Bloomsbury conservation area, contrary to policy CS14 (Promoting high quality places and conserving our heritage) of the London Borough of Camden Local Development Framework Core Strategy and policies DP24 (Securing high quality design) and DP25 (Conserving Camden's heritage) of the London Borough of Camden Local Development Framework Development Policies.

8.2. The planning statement submitted with the original planning application set out the case for the rear extension as follows:

- The rear elevations of each building along the wider terrace (5 to 10 Coptic Street) have been altered or obscured by additions and later development. A rear extension at 6 Coptic Street would not be interrupting an unbroken terrace of rear elevations:
 - 5 Coptic Street: infill of historic garden (ground floor level) and full width extension at first floor level.
 - 6 Coptic Street: infill of historic garden and half landing extension at first floor level.
 - 7 to 10 Coptic Street: rear elevation obscured by 1 Stedham Place.
- The rear of the building makes a lesser contribution to the conservation area as it has been altered over time, and is only seen from a restricted public area (Stedham Place) which is accessed by a controlled gate.
- The rear of the building is not specifically mentioned in the conservation area statement of being of significant importance or value.
- The proposed rear extension is half-width only which ensures that it is subservient to the existing building and limits amenity impacts on the adjoining property at 7 Coptic Street. The length of the extension is consistent with the adjoining extension at 5 Coptic Street. The extension sits one storey below the parapet level and two storeys below the proposed rear roof extension.
- The proposed rear extension has been chamfered to reduce the appearance of building bulk, and to ensure that the extension is secondary to the host building.
- The extension utilises high quality materials and detailing to compliment and be sympathetic to the existing building including brick and traditional timber framed sash windows.

8.3. As set out in section 7 of this statement, the LPA's planning officer agreed that an extension of greater proportions and lesser design quality was acceptable (ref no: 2013/5970/P):

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- *The erection of a half width, half depth closet wing extension, aligning with the existing extension at No.5 would be an appropriate form of development in this context.*
- *The extension would comply with Camden guidance which states that rear extension should be one storey below eaves (parapet) level.*

8.4. Despite these comments, the LPA has set out their objections to the rear extension as follows:

- *The proposal would result in a substantial built element projecting from the rear of the host building, disrupting the current simplicity of the buildings rear elevation that is an intrinsic characteristic of the wider estate.*
- *The rear extension would appear bulky and out of character with the host building.*
- *The rear extension would be largely unnoticed in the majority of public views and the effect on the townscape would not be as apparent as a change to the front of the property.*

8.5. The appellants response to these objections are set out below:

The extension is not 'substantial' measuring only half width and 3.5m in depth (which corresponds with the existing extension at 5 Coptic Street). This is considered to be a 'slim' vertical structure which will compliment the existing building, retaining traditional windows along one side of the rear elevation.

The chamfered edge will reduce the appearance of building bulk and will provide a contemporary interpretation of a rear closet wing extension.

The character of the wider estate and terrace is later extensions (5 Coptic Street) and later development (1 Stedham Place). The extension will not compromise an uninterrupted rear elevation along the wider terrace (5 to 10 Coptic Street) and will sit comfortably within this context found at the rear.

The new closet wing will be read as terminating one storey below the parapet of the building, thereby appearing as a subordinate element.

As the LPA have set out, the extension will only be visible from Stedham Place where access is limited to occupants of Stedham Place only. Stedham Place is not open to the general public.

8.6. The findings of the heritage consultant are again noted in terms of the rear extensions impact on the conservation area. Paragraphs 4.20 to 4.25 of the accompanying heritage statement provide an assessment of the proposed rear extension:

- *The rear elevation has been largely altered and adapted... this has created an informal character, of lesser contribution to the conservation area relative to that of the principal street frontage... this provides an appropriate context for the proposed rear extension at 6 Coptic Street.*
- *The overall design for the rear extension represents a contemporary interpretation of closet wing, which maintains a vertical emphasis.*
- *The extension will provide additional floorspace, and has been well considered, scaled and designed in a traditional manner which is sympathetic to the host building.*

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- *Complies with design guidance for rear extensions set out in the London Borough of Camden's Planning Guidance: CPG 1 Design, which details that rear extensions should be one storey below parapet level and also that rear extensions should be secondary to the building being extended, in terms of location, form, scale, proportions, dimensions and detailing.*
- *The rear closet wing extension will be of brick construction to match the host building, and also the characteristic palette of materials within this part of the conservation area.*
- *The new closet wing and traditional windows will replace an existing modern window to the second floor of the rear elevation. This will be a heritage benefit which will enhance the contribution of this building to the significance of the conservation area.*
- *Overall, the proposed rear extension will be subservient to the host building, and its positioning, form, scale, height and proportions, and the traditional design, detailing and use of materials will be appropriate to the character and appearance of the main building. Therefore, the significance of the conservation area will be sustained or enhance by these changes.*

8.7. In terms of planning policy, it is considered that the rear extension complies with the 'Development Plan' and the LPA's supporting guidance including CPG1 on the following grounds:

- CS14: The proposed rear extension is of high design quality. It will respect the significance of the conservation area, featuring traditional materials and detailing, and is positioned in an area of less heritage sensitivity given that the rear of the building is not open to the general public.
- DP24: The rear of the building sits within a varied character and setting, with the presence of rear extensions (5 Coptic Street) and development (1 Stedham Place) which obscures the rear of the wider terrace (7 to 10 Coptic Street). This varied setting provides an opportunity for a sensitive extension at the rear of the host building. The rear extension takes into account the proportions of the existing building; it is subordinate and secondary to the host building, being of half width (3m) and 3.5m in depth (which matches the adjoining extension at 5 Coptic Street). The chamfered edge further limits the presence and bulk of the extension when viewed from the rear. The materials are consistent with the prevailing buildings in the area.
- DP25: The significance of the conservation area is derived from the tight pattern of streets made up of residential terraces predominantly brick in materiality. In terms of the host building's contribution to this significance, it is the front elevation which is largely intact which makes the most significant contribution. The rear elevation is less important in that it is only accessible to very small proportion of the public (privately accessed) and given the notable later development that has occurred. The rear extension does not compromise the character and appearance of the conservation area. It is a sensitive addition to the building which provides much needed office floorspace in a central London location. The design has been carefully considered to compliment the existing host building and is supplemented by several public benefits which will enhance the contribution of the host building to the conservation area including improved fenestration pattern and hierarchy and the replacement of existing unsympathetic windows.
- An assessment of the rear extension in terms of CPG1 is provided below:
 - Due to the proportions and materiality of the rear extension, the extension respects the original design and proportions of the buildings. The proposed extension will replace an existing half landing extension.

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- The rear extension does not compromise any notable architectural features. The proposed extension has been designed to feature sympathetic materials and features including brick and traditional timber sash windows.
 - The historic pattern and established townscape along the rear elevation of the wider terrace has been altered by later extensions and buildings (1 Stedham Place). As such, the proposed extension does not compromise a consistent or established historic pattern.
 - The rear extension has been designed to minimise impact on adjoining properties in terms of amenity. The proposed extension increases the existing setback to 7 Coptic Street and is consistent with the building length of 5 Coptic Street. A chamfered edge has been provided to further limit amenity impacts to 7 Coptic Street. The proposal's impact on amenity is discussed further in subsequent parts of this statement.
 - The rear extension will not compromise existing garden or landscape features, as the extension is constructed at first and second floor levels.
 - The rear extension will sit at least one storey below the parapet of the building, as altered.
- 8.8. Furthermore, the provision of additional workspace at the site is considered to be a public benefit. The LPA's planning policies and the LPA's case officers report make it clear that employment floorspace in this central London location is the priority and has a valuable role to play in the areas economy and success. The provision of additional and better quality workspace which is suitable for local businesses including small and start up companies, is surely a public benefit and should be weighed against the perceived harm (as insinuated by the LPA) given their recommendation for refusal.
- 8.9. In conclusion, we believe that the proposed rear extension complies with CS14 (Promoting high quality places and conserving our heritage) of the London Borough of Camden Local Development Framework Core Strategy and policies DP24 (Securing high quality design) and DP25 (Conserving Camden's heritage) of the London Borough of Camden Local Development Framework Development Policies.

Reason for refusal 2

The proposed roof extension, by reason of its design, form, bulk, location in a pair of buildings unimpaired by later additions and removal of original roof form would result in harm to the character and appearance of the host building, the pair of buildings of which it forms part and of this part of the Bloomsbury conservation area, contrary to policy CS14 (Promoting high quality places and conserving our heritage) of the London Borough of Camden Local Development Framework Core Strategy and policies DP24 (Securing high quality design) and DP25 (Conserving Camden's heritage) of the London Borough of Camden Local Development Framework Development Policies.

- 8.10. The planning statement submitted with the original planning application set out the case for the roof extension as follows:
- There is an opportunity to extend the building at roof level as there are a mix of building types, heights and roof forms within Coptic Street and the wider conservation area.
 - There is a variance in building height along the wider terrace (5 to 10 Coptic Street); 6 Coptic Street sits below the adjoining buildings at 7 to 10 Coptic Street.

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- The increase in building height will not exceed the building height of the adjoining building at 7 Coptic Street and the overall building height will be increased by approximately 0.65m only.
- The loss of the existing roof form will not harm the appearance or character of the conservation area as the existing roof form is largely hidden from public views behind the existing parapet. To the rear, views are from the restricted public area (Stedham Place) only.
- The proposed roof form will be a traditional mansard roof, which is appropriate for a building of this age and appearance. As with the existing roof form, the proposed mansard will set behind the existing parapet line, which will greatly restrict its visibility from within the conservation area.
- The materiality of the proposed roof extension has been carefully considered to correspond with other roof forms in the conservation area, and will compromise tile hung face with dormer windows.

8.11. As set out in section 7 of this statement, the LPA's planning officer agreed that an extension of greater proportions and lesser design quality was acceptable (ref no: 2013/5970/P):

- *The scale varies along the terrace allowing for a roof extension to be built on the lower setting of Nos. 6. This would maintain the existing parapet height with No.5 and mediate between the taller buildings at No.7-10 (cons), thereby preserving the current arrangement.*
- *The relative change in terminating heights along this side of Coptic Street would suitably accommodate the mansard roof extension. the terminating height would be significantly concealed by the higher flank wall and chimney stack of No.7 and chimney stack at No.5.*
- *The proposed scheme is considered to retain the intrinsic character and appearance whilst adding accommodation to the building. Whilst the mansard roof would add a visible roof addition (mainly at upper floor level - 4th floor upwards), the mansard and dormer windows have been designed to relate to the architectural style and proportions of the Victorian façade below and in this instance is deemed an appropriate form of extension at this level and within the Bloomsbury Conservation area.*

8.12. Despite these comments, the LPA has set out their objections to the roof extension as follows:

- *The proposed mansard would sit within a 'group' that has an established roof form – one which terminates consistently at parapet level. A roof form projecting above parapet level would unacceptably detract from the existing roofscape, the overall host building and group of buildings.*
- *The roof form would be higher and inconsistent with 5 Coptic Street and 7 to 10 Coptic Street.*

8.13. The appellants response to these objections are set out below:

The extension has been designed to sit behind the existing parapet. As a result of this setback, and given the height of the building as viewed along Coptic Street (which is narrow), the roof extension will be largely screened from view.

The extension will sit below the maximum height of the adjoining building at 7 Coptic Street and will mediate between the difference in height at 5 Coptic Street and 7 Coptic Street.

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There is scope to increase the height of the building given the presence of taller buildings along Coptic Street and within the conservation area. The group of buildings of which the appeal property forms part of running along this stretch of Coptic Street have a variety of parapet heights and roof forms.

8.14. As previously set out in paragraph 8.8, the provision of additional employment floorspace is considered to be a public benefit which should be taken into account when assessing the proposal.

8.15. The findings of the heritage consultant are again noted in terms of the roof extension's impact on the conservation area. Paragraphs 4.12 to 4.19 of the accompanying heritage statement provide an assessment of the proposed roof extension:

- *There is significant variation at roof level along Coptic Street and throughout the conservation area, which is identified in the Bloomsbury Conservation area Appraisal. The wider diversity of roof forms, in addition to the lack of uniformity to the rooflines of the terrace at Nos.5-10 (cons) Coptic Street, provides an appropriate context for the proposed roof extension at No.6 Coptic Street.*
- *This will provide additional floorspace and has been well considered, scaled and designed in a traditional manner in order to respect the host building and the contribution of the roofscape to the surrounding conservation area.*
- *The proposed traditionally double pitched mansard roof form is an architectural feature appropriate to a building of this age, former residential use and status.*
- *The proposed mansard roof extension will be set back behind the existing, retained and well defined parapet lines to both the principal street frontage and rear. It will be of traditional construction, with tile hung face to both elevations.*
- *The proposed positioning, height, scale and form, and the traditional design, detailing and use of materials, of the proposed mansard roof extension, will ensure that this new element will appear appropriately subordinate to the host building, as seen in public views. The design of the mansard roof extension and dormer windows relates to the architectural style of the building and the overall terrace, and is also characteristic of the roofscape of the wider conservation area.*
- *This new addition at roof level will not only sit comfortably on the host building, but will also provide an appropriate scaled and designed transition between the lower M-shape roof form of its neighbour at No.5 and the taller and different V-shape at Nos.7-10 within the wider terrace and local townscape.*

8.16. In terms of planning policy, it is considered that the roof extension complies with the 'Development Plan' and the LPA's supporting guidance including CPG1 on the following grounds:

- CS14: The proposed roof extension is of high design quality. It will provide a roof form which is an architecture feature which is appropriate to a building of this age, character, use and status. The extension will sit behind the existing parapet, in order to ensure the parapet remains as the prominent feature when viewed from Coptic Street.
- DP24: The roof extension will provide an appropriate scale and designed transition between 7 Coptic Street and 5 Coptic Street. The height will not extend above the maximum height of the neighbour at 7 Coptic Street. The proportions of the existing building will be maintained, as the principal elevation terminating at parapet level will remain in situ and will be improved by the proposal.

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- DP25: The roof extension does not detract from the significance of the conservation area, and retains the principle elevation which is the most important feature of the building in terms of its contribution to the significance of the conservation area. The proposal will bring forward a number of heritage benefits which will preserve and enhance the conservation area including: the replacement of the unsympathetic modern window to the ground floor of the street frontage, with a new traditional timber framed sash window to match the existing traditional windows and the removal of the existing modern window to the second floor of the rear elevation, and replacement with new closet wing extension with traditional timber framed sash windows to match the existing traditional windows.
- An assessment of the roof extension in terms of CPG1 is provided below:
 - The proposed roof extension will respect the significance of the conservation area, featuring traditional materials and detailing.
 - The building does not form part of an unbroken run of valley roofs.
 - The building sits within a wider terrace of buildings which comprise different roof forms. 7 to 10 Coptic Street sits above 6 Coptic Street and creates an opportunity for increased height at the subject property. The proposed roof has been designed to sit behind the parapet line, and comprises an angled edge, to limit the visibility from street level.
 - The building does not already have an additional storey or mansard.
 - The building sits below the height of 7 Coptic Street and the proposed extension will not extend above the maximum building height of 7 Coptic Street. To the north, the building adjoining 5 Coptic Street sits higher than 6 Coptic Street.
 - The building and wider terrace does not have a roofline which is exposed to important London wide views. There are examples of taller development within the immediate area.
 - The character and appearance of the building would not be compromised as a result of the proposed roof extension. The principle facade is retained and improved by the proposal and the roof extension will sit behind the parapet line to limit the visual appearance within the streetscape.
 - The scale and proportions of the existing building would not be compromised by the proposal. The four storeys to Coptic Street would remain as the prominent feature of the building.

8.17. Despite the LPA's assessment and recommendation for refusal, the LPA have failed to make an assessment of the 'harm' created by the proposal and have not applied the test set out by paragraph 132 of the NPPF. Furthermore, they have not made a balanced judgement considering the benefits brought forward by the proposal as set out in paragraph 134 of the NPPF. Paragraph 134 sets out that in making a properly balanced and proportionate determination the effects of development resulting in less than substantial harm should be weighed against and in favour of the wider public benefits delivered by the proposals as a whole, including heritage benefits.

8.18. The accompanying heritage statement makes a full assessment of the proposals impact on the heritage asset in section 4 and in respect of paragraphs 132 and 134 as set out above. The accompanying heritage statement sets out the proposal will bring forward several heritage benefits including:

- The replacement of unsympathetic windows on the front and rear elevations will provide a heritage benefit.
- The replacement of modern windows on the ground floor of the rear elevation will provide a better internal environment for future occupants.

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- 8.19. In addition to the heritage benefits, the proposal would also provide public benefits, in that additional employment floorspace would be provided at the site. Given the site's strategic inner city location, employment floorspace is considered the priority land use.
- 8.20. In making a balanced judgement of the perceived 'harm' as well as the benefits brought forward by the proposal, the heritage assessment concludes:
- It is the conclusion of this heritage impact assessment that these revised application proposals will overall preserve the character and appearance of the conservation area as a whole. This designated heritage asset will be conserved and its significance sustained.
 - These proposals will therefore accord with the principles set out in the relevant statutory duty of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation areas) Act 1990, national policy set out in the NPPF 2012 (paragraphs 128, 131, 132, 134) and supported by NPPG 2014, and relevant regional and local policy and guidance, including the London Plan 2015, Camden's Core Strategy, Development Policies DPD, and Planning Guidance SPD.
- 8.21. In conclusion, we believe that the proposed roof extension complies with CS14 (Promoting high quality places and conserving our heritage) of the London Borough of Camden Local Development Framework Core Strategy and policies DP24 (Securing high quality design) and DP25 (Conserving Camden's heritage) of the London Borough of Camden Local Development Framework Development Policies.

Reason for refusal 3

The proposed rear closet wing extension by reason of its height and location would result in a loss of amenity to neighbouring occupiers by virtue of the impact on sunlight, daylight and sense of enclosure to the adjoining roof terrace and windows at 5 and 7 Coptic Street, contrary to policy CS5 (Managing the impact of growth and development) the London Borough of Camden Local Development Framework Core Strategy; and Policy DP26 (Managing the impact of development on occupiers and neighbours) of the London Borough of Camden Local Development Framework Development Policies.

- 8.22. As set out in section 7 of this statement, the LPA's planning officer agreed that the proposal would not result in impacts which compromise the amenity of adjoining neighbours (ref no: 2013/5970/P):
- *With particular regard to Nos. 3 Stedham Place and 7 Coptic Street, the applicant's sunlight/daylight report also demonstrate the rear extension would not exert any material harm upon any habitable window, in terms of VSC and sunlight to daylight. Whilst the report notes that 3 windows, namely a rooflight above to the ground floor level extension and flank window at first floor level to No.7 Coptic and a rear facing window at second floor level to 3 Stedham Place would result in a loss, it is either marginal or to a secondary window serving a room. Given the proposal would not exert any material harm upon any habitable window on the immediate neighbour of No.7 Coptic street, this is also considered to be the case for No.8, 9 and 10 Coptic Street, given their proximity from the development. Whilst there would be an impact upon daylight to the adjoining terrace of No.3 Stedham Place, the impact would not substantiate a reason for refusal on this issue alone.*

- 8.23. Despite these comments, the LPA has set out their objections to the rear extension as follows:

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- *The Council has noted the error identified by the applicant, but maintains concerns regarding the level of impact on sunlight and daylight to the adjoining properties.*
- *While the rear extension would be reduced in width and feature a chamfered element, the height and essential massing would remain for all intents purposes, particularly when viewed from the residential windows of 7 Coptic Street.*
- *The increase in height means that the proposed extension would have overbearing of not overwhelming visual impact, dominating the outlook from the adjoining property.*
- *The extension would result in a significantly diminished outlook which would result in a harmful sense of enclosure.*

8.24. The appellants response to these objections are set out below:

- A corrected sunlight and daylight report has been submitted to the LPA. The consultant has provided a justification for the errors originally made in the report (letter dated 22 March 2016 submitted with the appeal).
- The corrected sunlight and daylight report demonstrates that sunlight and daylight impacts to will be within the recommended BRE guidelines and therefore will not compromise the amenity of adjoining properties and neighbours.
- The proposed extension is consistent with the length of the adjoining extension at 5 Coptic Street and therefore, there will be no sense of enclosure to windows at the first floor level of this property.
- The proposed extension will extend further towards the rear on the second floor level than 5 Coptic Street. However, this is modest in length and will not induce an unacceptable sense of enclosure given that the second floor benefits from openings across a good portion of the rear elevation.
- In terms of 7 Coptic Street, the proposed extension is setback further than the existing rear extension. A greater separation distance to the side boundary will be provided (2.5m in total) and this is not considered to induce a sense of enclosure.
- The purpose of the chamfered edge is to make sure no adverse impacts are realised in terms of outlook. The proposed rear extension will not obstruct a 45 degree view from the windows in the rear of the adjoining building at 7 Coptic Street, which will maintain a sense of openness.

8.25. In terms of planning policy, it is considered that the rear extension complies with the 'Development Plan' in terms of amenity. The following paragraphs set out a justification for the proposal.

8.26. In terms of sunlight/daylight, it is acknowledged that the sunlight/daylight report initially submitted to the Council contained several errors resulting from inaccurate modelling. This was rectified by the sunlight/daylight consultant (with reasons for the inaccuracies explained) and a revised report submitted. The relevant and correct report is dated 18 May 2016.

8.27. The error in the sunlight/daylight report can be validated by considering the likely impact of the rear extension on the adjoining roof terrace at 5 Coptic Street. Given the orientation of the roof terrace and the likely sun pattern, it is clear that the extension would not result in a loss of sunlight as severe as originally reported. This can be verified by using on site judgement.

8.28. The most recent report shows that the proposal is compliant in terms of daylight to all adjoining habitable windows (using the vertical sky component test). Please refer to paragraph 4.3 and appendix 2 of the report dated 18 May 2016.

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- 8.29. In terms of sunlight to adjoining habitable windows, the report shows that the proposal is compliant. Please refer to paragraph 4.4 and appendix 2 of the report dated 18 May 2016.
- 8.30. The report finds that sunlight to the adjoining garden space is compliant with BRE recommendations which require 50% of garden spaces to receive at least two hours of sunlight on the 21st March. The adjoining garden space at 5 Coptic Street will receive 56% of sunlight on this day. Please refer to paragraph 4.5 and appendix 2 of the report dated 18 May 2016.
- 8.31. The conclusion of the Right of Light Consulting report confirms that the development design satisfies all of the requirements set out in the BRE guide 'Site Layout Planning for Daylight and Sunlight'.
- 8.32. An acceptable level of outlook will be maintained from both 5 Coptic Street and 7 Coptic Street. There are sufficient openings along the rear elevation at 5 Coptic Street to minimise any sense of enclosure.
- 8.33. In terms of 7 Coptic Street, a 45 degree angle of view is maintained from the openings in the rear elevation which will ensure a suitable level of outlook and maintain a sense of openness.
- 8.34. Furthermore, it is understood that the openings which directly face onto the common boundary serve non-habitable windows only.
- 8.35. In conclusion, we believe that the proposed rear extension complies with CS5 (Managing the impact of growth and development) the London Borough of Camden Local Development Framework Core Strategy; and Policy DP26 (Managing the impact of development on occupiers and neighbours) of the London Borough of Camden Local Development Framework Development Policies.

9. Conclusions

- 9.1. This statement provides grounds for an appeal against the LPA's decision to refuse planning permission (ref no: 2016/0321/P) relating to a development at 6 Coptic Street, London, WC1A 1NH: *Erection of two storey rear extension and mansard roof extension with associated fenestration alterations.*
- 9.2. This statement sets out that the planning application (ref no: 2016/0321/P) follows a previous planning application which was considered acceptable by the LPA's planning officers (ref no: 2013/5970/P) but was refused by the LPA's planning committee, citing reasons for refusal which corresponded to a number of neighbour objections and comments. Despite making changes to the refused scheme, and seeking professional heritage advice, the planning application (ref no: 2016/0321/P) was refused on the same grounds as the previous application (ref no: 2013/5970/P).
- 9.3. Section 8 of this statement criticises the LPA's reasons for refusal, and provides further justification for the proposals. An assessment of the relevant planning policies is set out and conclusions made which find that the proposals comply with National and Local planning policy. It is on this basis that the appellant believes the appeal should be allowed.

OFFICERS' REPORT

Reason for Referral to Committee: The application was referred by the Director of Culture of Environment after briefing members

1. SITE

- 1.1 The application site is located at the west side of Coptic Street, on the junction with Little Russell Street. The site can also be accessed to the south via New Oxford Street and the west (rear) via Stedham Place.
- 1.2 The application building is 4 storey (plus basement), comprising office accommodation (Class B1a).
- 1.3 The buildings along the west side of Coptic street are predominantly residential in use (Class C3). Whilst Nos. 7, 8 and 9 are wholly residential, only the third floor level of No.5 and upper floor levels of No.10 are residential, their lower levels are commercial in use being either offices (B1a) or as a restaurant (Class A3).
- 1.4 On the east side of Coptic Street, Nos.24, 25, 27 and 29 are in residential use, with the lower floor level of No.24 in use as a restaurant (Class A3). On the junction with Little Russell Street, directly facing the application building is the purpose built residential block of No.1 Little Russell Street.
- 1.5 To the rear, Nos. 1, 3 and 2-5 Stedham Place are in office use (Class B1a), whilst the upper floor level of No.3 Stedham Place/No.5 Coptic Street is in residential use. To the north of the application site, Stedham Chambers is a purpose built residential building.
- 1.6 The application building is not listed, nor the adjacent/adjoining buildings, but it has been identified as making a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area.
- 1.7 The application building falls within the Museum Street local area of Central London and Archaeological Priority Area.

2. THE PROPOSAL

- 2.1 The application proposes:
 - Replacement of main valley roof with slate clad mansard roof comprising 2 lead cheeked dormer windows to the front pitch and 1 lead cheeked dormer window to the rear roof pitch.
 - The erection of a 2 storey brick faced half width rear extension at 1st up to 2nd floor level. The extension measures 3.5m wide and 3.2m deep to align with the existing rear extension at no. 5 Coptic Street. The rear elevation of the extension would feature 2 timber framed sash windows.

- 2.2 The proposal has, since the initial submission, been revised to remove:
- The change of use of office (B1a) to form 4 residential flats, namely 1 x 2 bedroom unit at basement and ground floor level, 2 x 1 bedroom units at first and second floor level and 1 x 2 bedroom unit third and fourth floor level.
- 2.3 To clarify issues raised during consultation, the proposal does not include:
- The provision or facilitation of a roof terrace to any roof
 - The enlargement/excavation of the basement floor level
 - The removal or replacement of trees
 - The installation of telecommunications equipment
 - Alterations at or related to No.7 Coptic Street
 - The change of use of the office to residential accommodation under permitted development rights (GPDO Prior Approval)
 - The change of use of the office to a hotel
- 2.4 Works sought as part of this application have not commenced on site. An enforcement investigation (see relevant history) and site visit has recently taken place by the case officer and enforcement officer to confirm this matter. Upon inspection it can be confirmed that internal alterations and associated scaffolding are necessary for refurbishment/repair only.
- 2.5 The principal considerations material to the determination of this application are summarised as follows:
- Design
 - Amenity
 - Transport
 - Other Matters

3. RELEVANT HISTORY

- 3.1 5 Coptic Street:
- 29459 – (Granted 11/09/1979) Continued use of the second and third floors as offices. – Refused, in part due to the loss of permanent residential accommodation
- 3.2 6 Coptic Street:
- 8800404 - (Refused 19/04/1989) Rear extension (fronting Stedham Place) at first and second floors levels for office use. The extension was full width and depth of the property. An appeal received against the Council's failure to issue their decision within the appropriate period. This appeal decision is addressed in para 2.17 of this report. The conclusions reached by the Inspector are material to assessment of the current application.
 - PS9804181 – (Granted 12/06/1998) - Conversion of existing offices into 2 no. self-contained flats (one 3 bed & one 2 bed).
 - EN13/1140 – (Closed 18/11/2013) Demolition of building prior to planning permission in a conservation area.
- 3.3 7 Coptic Street:

- PS9704328 – (Granted 08/05/1997) Use of whole property as a single family dwelling
- PS9704080 – (Granted 08/05/1997) The demolition of existing additions to rear of the building and the erection of a 2 storey conservatory including internal alterations in connection with the use of the building as a single family dwelling house.
- APP/X5210/C/13/2198147 - Change of roof from valley to flat roof, installation of glazed balustrades to enclose roof terrace, and installation of two items of air conditioning plant to the roof. Appeal dismissed (05/ 10/2013). This appeal decision is addressed in para 2.11 of this report. The conclusions reached by the Inspector are material to assessment of the current application.
Non-public submission (pre-application advice):
- CA\2011\ENQ\07220 - (Pre-application advice provided on 14/12/2011) - A loft conversion to both properties.

3.4 8 Coptic Street:

- 8400347 – (Granted 23/07/1984) Change of use from office to doctor's surgery on the basement and ground floors and three bed-sit flats on the upper floors.
- 8601066 – (Granted 20/08/1986) Use of the ground floor and basement as an extension to the residential maisonette.
Non-public submission (pre-application advice):
- CA\2013\ENQ\01491 – (Pre-application advice provided on 11/03/2013) The erection of a glazed and timber access room at roof level with glazed balustrade associated with the use as residential dwelling (Class C3).

3.5 9 Coptic Street:

- 8900089 (Granted 22/06/1989) Conversion of basement and ground floors into film studio and reception area used in conjunction with 1 Stedham Place and upper floors into residential use and erection of rear glazed extension on ground floor and installation of new shopfront with separate door

3.6 1 Little Russell Street:

- 8703699 (Granted 07/07/1988) The erection of a basement ground part three-storey and part five-storey residential development comprising twenty three flats namely 8 x 2 person 2 x 3 person 3 x 4 person 6 x 5 person 2 x 8 person and two disabled person units.
The conclusions reached are material to the assessment of the current application.

4. CONSULTATIONS

Statutory Consultees

4.1 N/a

Conservation Area Advisory Committee

4.2 The Bloomsbury CAAC objected:

- Mansard unduly prominent,
- Loss of historic fabric.

Local Groups

- 4.3 The South Bloomsbury Residents' Association objected:
- Roof and rear extension would result in loss of light to occupiers on Stedham Place,
 - Loss of amenity associated with terrace at No.7 Coptic Street,
 - Development history at No.7 Coptic Street.
- 4.4 Stedham Chambers TRA (Secretary and Treasurer – representing 15 households):
- Loss of existing roof form,
 - Rear extension visible from Stedham Place Rear extension out of character,
 - Loss of light and overshadowing,
 - Reduction in green space and threat to biodiversity,
 - Sunlight/daylight assessment inadequate,
 - Loss of outlook,
 - Greater sense of enclosure.
- 4.5 Councillor Olad has objected to the planning application.

Adjoining Occupiers

<i>Number of letters sent</i>	11
<i>Total number of responses received</i>	16
<i>Number in support</i>	1
<i>Number of objections</i>	12

- 4.6 A site notice was displayed on Coptic Street from 24/09/2013 and a public notice was published in the Ham & High from 03/10/2013. During this period, the Council did not use the Camden New Journal to publicise planning applications.

A summary of comments/objections received from the following addresses:

No.1 Little Russell Street (x 3):

- Previous building operations at No.7 Coptic Street in terms of construction noise and management therein
- Loss of amenity associated with terrace at No.7 Coptic Street
- Roof extension resulting in a loss of light
- Roof terrace proposed is out of character
- Loss of existing roof form
- Loss of privacy
- Rear extension visible from Stedham Place
- Impact on parking
- Unauthorised works taking place on site already

8 Coptic Street (x2):

- Loss of sunlight/daylight
- Unauthorised works taking place on site already
- Greater scale

3 Stedham Place (2):

- Loss of light to hedgerow
- Loss of existing roof form, contrary to Bloomsbury Conservation Area management plan
- No details of materials
- Permitted development right (change of office use) does not apply in this case
- Unauthorised works taking place on site already
- Notification process incorrect: No letter received, no site notice on Stedham Place, advertised in Ham & High which is not the local paper (officer comment: please see above for consultations)
- Submission details incorrect: sunlight/daylight analysis, Basement impact assessment (BIA), no marketing for office loss, No Sustainable/Transport/Tree Survey/Telecommunications Statement.
- Relevant refusals (public and non-public submission) of roof extensions at Nos.7 & 8 Coptic Street
- Historic refusal at No.6 Coptic Street for rear extension
- The ownership of the site has changed during the application process
- Sunlight/daylight assessment inadequate – No ADF calculation
- No revised design & access statement or application form
- Incorrect scale of drawings
- Reduction in green space and threat to biodiversity
- Effect on wind velocity and pattern disruption
- Effect on bats and green terrace containing 150 species

25 Coptic Street:

- Unauthorised works taking place on site already
- Loss of character
- Over development
- Lack of consultation paper

5. **POLICIES**

5.1 **National and Regional Policy**

National Planning Policy Framework 2012
London Plan 2011

5.2 **LDF Core Strategy and Development Policies**

CS1 (Distribution of growth)

CS5 (Managing the impact of growth and development)

CS9 (Achieving a successful Central London)

CS13 (Tackling climate change and promoting higher environmental standards)

CS14 (Promoting high quality places and conserving our heritage)
DP12 (Supporting strong centres)
DP16 (The transport implications of development)
DP22 (Promoting sustainable design and construction)
DP24 (Securing high quality design)
DP25 (Conserving Camden's heritage)
DP26 (Managing the impact of development on occupiers and neighbours)

5.3 **Supplementary Planning Policies**

Camden Planning Guidance 2011/2013:

CPG1 Design; CPG5 Town Centres, Retail and Employment; CPG6 Amenity; CPG7 Transport; CPG8 Planning Obligations

Bloomsbury Conservation Area Statement/Bloomsbury Conservation Area Appraisal & Management Strategy (2011)

6. **ASSESSMENT**

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

- Design
- Amenity
- Transport
- Other Matters

Design

6.2 Coptic Street is a narrow street with significant enclosure provided by the predominantly four-storey buildings along it. The view north is terminated by the British Museum. Building forms and materials vary along the street.

Roof extension

6.3 Located on the west side of Coptic Street, the application building is 1 of 6 four-storey brick building with stuccoed ground floor Victorian residential houses (Nos.5-10 cons) bounded to the north by the taller Stedham Chambers and 44-50 New Oxford Street to south.

6.4 Upon a site streetscape assessment, it is clear Nos.5-10 (cons), by virtue of their terminating height, fenestration pattern/alignment and prevailing development to the rear (discussed in part 2.15) can be separated into 2 distinct groups.

6.5 With regard to terminating height, the parapet line of Nos. 7-10 (cons) is no less than 1m above that of its smaller neighbours at Nos.5 and 6, thereby enjoying an additional internal storey. As a result, the fenestration pattern of Nos. 7-10 is far more elongated, with a significant vertical emphasis, whilst Nos.5 and 6 are lesser so.

6.6 Upon an aerial assessment, a distinct divide in this group of 6 buildings is evident. Where Nos. 7-10 (cons) feature relatively similar (east-west) butterfly roofs, the adjacent Nos.5 and 6 feature 'M' shaped roofs (north-south), 1 full storey below.

- 6.7 The Bloomsbury conservation area appraisal and management strategy indicates that inappropriate extensions should be resisted, particularly where these interrupt the consistency of a uniform terrace or the prevailing scale and character of a block, or are overly prominent in the street.
- 6.8 Within this policy context, whilst Nos.5-10 (cons) do not form a uniform terrace, the scale varies along the terrace allowing for a roof extension to be built on the lower setting of Nos. 6. This would maintain the existing parapet height with No.5 and mediate between the taller buildings at No.7-10 (cons), thereby preserving the current arrangement.
- 6.9 The additional storey would be a traditionally designed mansard roof (with a pitch of 70 degrees and 500mm gap between the dormer and the ridge) which essentially infills the existing valley, albeit increasing the ridge height marginally by approximately 0.65m.
- 6.10 The relative change in terminating heights along this side of Coptic Street would suitably accommodate the mansard roof extension. Whilst the ridge would rise above the parapet of No.7, albeit recessed from the façades by 3m, the terminating height would be significantly concealed by the higher flank wall and chimney stack of No.7 and chimney stack at No.5. These existing elements would mitigate concerns of newly created and apparent flank walls as a result of the roof extension.
- 6.11 The proposed scheme is considered to retain the intrinsic character and appearance whilst adding accommodation to the building. The relationship between Nos.5 and 6, as well as those along this side of Coptic Street would be retained. Whilst the mansard roof would add a visible roof addition (mainly at upper floor level - 4th floor upwards), the mansard and dormer windows have been designed to relate to the architectural style and proportions of the Victorian façade below and in this instance is deemed an appropriate form of extension at this level and within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area.
- 6.12 The issue and impact of a roof alteration/extension was addressed in the appeal decision at the adjacent building of No.7 Coptic Street in 2013 namely:
- 6.13 The merits of the proposal thus turn on the nature of the changes being made to this particular building. No 7 Coptic Street is part of a traditional and regular terrace of four houses with butterfly pitched slate roofs and intervening brick fire walls. The appeal development alters this form at one of the four houses, and introduces wooden patio flooring, glazed balustrades, and the air conditioning units. The setbacks from front and rear walls are not sufficient for the roof to absorb/accommodate the change without significant visual effect, and there has been a material change to the external appearance of the building. Both the materials used and more fundamentally the change to the form of the roof are not architecturally sympathetic to the age and character of the building and its traditional pitched roof. The effect on appearance is out of keeping with No 7 and with the terrace as a whole, and even after taking into account the greater variety of character in the upper zone referred to, I consider that it appears incongruous.'

- 6.14 Notwithstanding the additional matters raised as a part of this appeal, it is clear the inspector considered the relevant guidance of CPG1, namely to 'avoid roof alteration or addition where there is likely to be an adverse effect on "...the appearance of the building..." and where "...There is an unbroken run of valley roofs; Complete terraces or groups of buildings have a roof line that is largely unimpaired by alterations or extensions....'.
- 6.15 In this context, the inspector has concluded the terrace to be that of Nos.7-10 (inc), omitting the adjacent buildings of Nos.5 & 6. The inspector did not adjudge them to form part of a longer terrace for assessment under criteria of CPG1. In this instance, little weight should be given to this particular appeal decision, aswell as pre-application advice issued at Nos.7-10 to establish future development at roof level for No.6.
- Rear extension
- 6.16 Stedham Place is accessed via New Oxford Street, via a controlled gate used solely by the occupier's properties of Stedham Place and Stedham Chambers. Comprising a single highway lane, this alley is used for additional seating for the restaurant at No.5 Coptic Street. Whilst the rear elevation of Nos.7-10 (cons) Coptic Street is obstructed from public view by the 3 storey building of No.1 Stedham Place, no such obstruction is set in front of Nos.5 and 6 Coptic Street and these buildings are therefore visible from public view as are/would their existing/proposed extensions.
- 6.17 Both Nos. 5 & 6 have infilled the historic 'rear garden' of the properties with single storey full width (5.5m)/full depth (6.7m) extensions at ground floor level, abutting Stedham Place. Whilst the height of the single storey extension at No.5 is approximately 4m, No.6 is lower at 3.4m.
- 6.18 At first floor level, No.6 features a half landing extension 1.7m (w) x 1.8m (d) x 1.6m (h), No.5 however features a significantly larger full width (5.5m), half depth (3.2m), 3.2m in height first floor extension.
- 6.19 In terms of policy approach, a rear extension is often the most appropriate way to extend a house or property. However, rear extensions that are insensitively or inappropriately designed can spoil the appearance of a property or group of properties and harm the amenity of neighbouring properties. However, rear extensions that are insensitively or inappropriately designed can spoil the appearance of a property or group of properties and harm the amenity of neighbouring properties. The issue of a rear extension on this particular site was addressed in the appeal decision at No.6 in 1989 namely:
- 6.20 "The test is whether the proposal would preserve and enhance the character of the Conservation area. In my opinion, it fails the test since it represents an overdevelopment of the site and uses window details which area inappropriate to the mainly Georgian character of the terrace."
- 6.21 It should be noted however, this application sought an extension at first and second floor level which was full width and full depth (Dimensions: 6.6m depth and 5.8m

width) as opposed to this scheme for a half width, half depth extension (Dimensions: 3.2m depth and 3.5m width). With this in mind however, it must be assessed whether this proposal has overcome the above concerns.

- 6.22 With regard to 'overdevelopment', it is considered the erection of a half width, half depth closet wing extension, aligning with the existing extension at No.5 would be an appropriate form of development in this context, whilst a full width full depth extension, as per the appeal, would not be appropriate. The extension would comply with Camden guidance which states that rear extension should be one storey below eaves (parapet) level and "In cases where a higher extension is appropriate, a smaller footprint will generally be preferable to compensate for any increase in visual mass". The appeal would not accord with this guidance by virtue of its significant size and scale.
- 6.23 Whilst the existing extension at No.5, by virtue of its width, materials and detailed design, represents a squat, bulky and rather unsympathetic addition, this proposal would seek an appropriately 'slim' (half width) closet wing extension. Although it would rise 2m above the adjacent rear extension of No.5, it would be set back appropriately from Stedham Place, remain one full storey below roof level and maintain a vertical emphasis, more sympathetic to the character of the building.
- 6.24 It is important to note that the proposal also partially removes the ground floor extension. Reintroducing a small rear yard at the rear of the property. This reduces the bulk of development and improves the quality of accommodation at ground level. It also allows light into the basement to improve the quality of accommodation at the lower level.
- 6.25 In terms of detailed design, the brickwork proposed would match that of the main building. The windows proposed to the rear elevation would be in a similar manner to the existing fenestration arrangement to this façade. The proposed roof, rear extension and associated elevation alterations in respect of size, scale and materials proposed is considered appropriate to the character and appearance of the main building.
- 6.26 Within this context and in view of the appeal decision greatly differing from this submission, this proposal does overcome concerns of overdevelopment and detailed design raised within the inspectors decision.

Amenity

- 6.27 Policy DP26 sets out how the Council will protect the quality of life of building occupiers and neighbours by only granting permission for development that does not cause harm to amenity.
- 6.28 The issue of amenity was addressed in the appeal decision at No.6 in 1989 namely:
- 6.29 "The proposal would, in my view, have a serious effect on the light reaching the premises either side, No.7 Coptic Street and 3 Stedham Place."

6.30 In light of this decision, it must be assessed whether this proposal has overcome the above concerns, particularly given that in this instance as opposed to the appeal assessment, empirical evidence rather than an on-site assessment can be used.

Sunlight and daylight

6.31 The applicant has submitted a sunlight/daylight report including calculations of predicted daylight and sunlight levels enjoyed by the occupiers of the surrounding buildings to demonstrate compliance with the Council's standards and BRE guidelines in terms of any significant loss of day/sunlight, in particular Nos. 3 Stedham Place and 7 Coptic Street.

6.32 The impact of the proposal upon No.1 Little Russell Street, Stedham Chambers and 30 Coptic Street is also included in view of the neighbour consultation. The sunlight/daylight report follows the methodology set out by the Building Research Establishment's (BRE) guidelines, namely "Site layout planning for daylight and sunlight: A guide to good practice (2011), in accordance with CPG6 (Amenity).

6.33 The Council expects that all developments receive adequate daylight and sunlight to support the activities taking place in that building. As per CPG6 (amenity), whilst the Council will not necessarily be looking to see that proposals meet any particular minimum or maximum objective standard, if a proposal would have an unreasonable impact on amenity, the planning application would likely be refused.

6.34 The applicant's sunlight/daylight report, in line with the requirements of CPG6 (amenity), demonstrates the erection of a roof and rear extension would not exert any material harm upon any habitable window at No.1 Little Russell Street, Stedham Chambers and 30 Coptic Street, in terms of VSC and sunlight to windows. The greatest impact at No.1 Little Russell Street being 0.3% VSC loss, 0.1% VSC loss at Stedham Chambers and 0.0% VSC loss at 30 Coptic Street, imperceptible to the human eye. It should be noted that the submission of an additional method assessment, namely ADF (Average Daylight Factor) need not be required should the above method be provided and demonstrate no material harm would arise.

6.35 With particular regard to Nos. 3 Stedham Place and 7 Coptic Street, the applicant's sunlight/daylight report also demonstrate the rear extension would not exert any material harm upon any habitable window, in terms of VSC and sunlight to daylight. Whilst the report notes that 3 windows, namely a rooflight above to the ground floor level extension and flank window at first floor level to No.7 Coptic and a rear facing window at second floor level to 3 Stedham Place would result in a loss, it is either marginal or to a secondary window serving a room. Given the proposal would not exert any material harm upon any habitable window on the immediate neighbour of No.7 Coptic street, this is also considered to be the case for No.8, 9 and 10 Coptic Street, given their proximity from the development. Whilst there would be an impact upon daylight to the adjoining terrace of No.3 Stedham Place, the impact would not substantiate a reason for refusal on this issue alone.

Privacy

- 6.36 The application building sits on the junction road with Coptic Street and Little Russell Street. Directly across the junction road (approximately 9m in distance) from the 4 storey application building is the larger 6 storey residential building of No.1 Little Russell Street. Both buildings mutually overlook one another as a result of their window arrangement. This is also the case with Nos. 7 and 8 Coptic Street, all of which are in use as residential at upper floor levels. In this instance, the proposal would introduce 2 dormers windows to the roof, facing No.1 Little Russell Street.
- 6.37 Having assessed the situation on site, reviewed the objections received and following discussions on site with the occupiers of the upper floor levels at No.1 Little Russell Street, it is considered the proposal would not exert any greater loss to privacy levels than the existing arrangement. The relationship between the proposed mansard accommodation would in fact be marginally improved, due to the set back of the mansard window position behind the front building line, so that a greater gap would exist between those windows and facing units within No.1 Little Russell Street that is already present at lower levels. The existing distance from the front façade of No.6 Coptic street, across the highway to the front façade of No.1 Little Russell Street is approximately 10m; the dormers windows set back from the front façade of No.6 Coptic Street would be approximately 10.7m across the highway to the front façade of No.1 Little Russell Street. Given the location of each property, being on opposite sides of the road, one on Coptic Street, the other on Little Russell Street, this matter would not substantiate a reason for refusal on this issue alone.
- 6.38 With regard to the rear, other than the ground floor level, the 1st, 2nd and 3rd floor level façades of No.6 Coptic Street currently sits 14.5m from the front façade of Nos. 2-5 Stedham Place, currently in use as offices.
- 6.39 The proposal would introduce 3 new openings on the rear elevation in total, 2 on the 2 storey extension and 1 dormer window at main roof level, 11.5m from the front façade of No.2-5 Stedham Place and 9.7m from the facade of Stedham Chambers.
- 6.40 Windows would not be introduced on any flank elevation facing north or south, thereby no greater level of overlooking would take place to Nos. 3 Stedham Place, Stedham Chambers and 7 Coptic Street or to properties on Stedham Place. In this respect, the proposal would not exert a materially harmful impact on the amenities of adjoining occupiers, in terms of privacy, overlooking, outlook or sense of enclosure.
- 6.41 Within this context and in view of the appeal decision, this proposal is considered to overcome the amenity concerns and particularly those raised during consultation.

Transport

- 6.42 Given the nature and extent of works proposed, in addition to good access to all areas of the site, a Construction Management Plan, shall not be required in this instance.

- 6.43 The proposal would not result in a significant intensification of use and associated traffic generation/ congestion.

Land Use

- 6.44 In mind of the originally submitted (paragraph 1.2), the provision of new and refurbished office floorspace is supported by Policy DP13.

Other Material Considerations

- 6.45 Given the extent of objection relating to the adjoining development and the dense residential nature of the site, an informative shall be attached notifying the applicant that noise from demolition and construction works and sound insulation between dwellings is subject to control under the Building Regulations and/or the London Buildings Acts.
- 6.46 The proposal, by virtue of its location, extent of works to take place and surrounding context, would not exert any material harm upon local designated open spaces, biodiversity (wildlife, roosting bats, hedgerows) and wind velocity to Stedham Place.

Community Infrastructure Levy

- 6.47 The proposal is not liable for the Mayor of London's CIL

7. CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The proposed alterations and extensions to no.6 Coptic Street are considered to retain the intrinsic character and appearance whilst adding accommodation to the building. The rear and roof extension have comply with Camden guidance and would be subordinate to and not overbearing on the building and surrounding properties. The proposal; not exert a materially harmful impact on the amenities of adjoining occupiers, in terms of privacy, overlooking, outlook or sense of enclosure.
- 7.2 Planning Permission is recommended for approval.

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 010, 011, 012, 013, 020 Rev A, 021 Rev A, 022, 23 Rev A, site location plan.

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

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.

**Department of the Environment and
Department of Transport**



Common Services

Room 1404 Tollgate House Houlton Street Bristol BS2 9DJ

Telex 449321

Direct Line 0272-218 927

Switchboard 0272-218811

Jacob Blacker Architects
5 Shepherds Walk
LONDON
NW3 5UE

Your reference

Our reference

T/APP/X5210/A/88/108145/P4

Date

19 APR 89

Gentlemen

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1971, SECTION 36 AND SCHEDULE 9
APPEAL BY GOLDKORN DAVIES AND CO
APPLICATION NO: PL/8800404 ✓

1. I have been appointed by the Secretary of State for the Environment to determine the above mentioned appeal, which is against the failure of the London Borough of Camden to give notice of their decision within the appropriate period on an application for planning permission for a rear extension to first and second floors for additional office space at No 6 Coptic Street, Bloomsbury, London WC1. I have considered the written representations made by you and the council, and also those made at the time of the application by an interested person. I inspected the site on 20 March 1989.

2. No 6 Coptic Street is an office building occupied by your clients' solicitors practice. It consists of 4 storeys, the uppermost of which is contained in the attic space, together with a basement. At the rear it has a single-storey flat roof extension, which backs onto a small cul-de-sac, Stedham Place. Immediately to the north of the rear extension is a stepped 2-storey flat roof extension to the rear of No 5 Coptic Street, which houses a surveyor's office having its own address and entrance onto Stedham Place. To the south is a 2-storey building fronting Stedham Place. On the opposite side of Stedham Place a 4-storey building is currently under construction, while at the head of Stedham Place is a 5-storey block of flats known as Stedham Chambers. The site lies within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area.

3. Your clients wish to expand their office space by constructing a 2-storey extension above the existing rear extension. From my inspection of the site and its surroundings, and my consideration of the written representations, I have formed the opinion that this proposal gives rise to the following issues: firstly, whether it would be detrimental to the maintenance of an appropriate balance of uses in the locality; secondly, its effect on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area; and thirdly, its effect on the amenities of persons living or working in nearby properties.

4. In the council's adopted Borough Plan, the site lies within what is known as the Community Area, an area surrounding the Central Activities Zone wherein the council aims to restrict commercial development and protect the residential community and its local facilities. One of the policies designed to achieve this states that the development of office floorspace, either by new building or change of use, will not be permitted. Although there is disagreement over the size of the increase - whether it be 20 or 24% - there is no dispute that what your clients propose would involve an increase in office floorspace at their premises. However, it seems to me

that, while contrary to the wording of the policy, an increase in office floorspace on a site which is already in office use would in itself pose little threat to the objective of the policy, namely the maintenance of the residential community in the area. I do not see this issue alone constituting a decisive objection to the proposal.

5. The council's policies also provide for a maximum desirable plot ratio in this area of 3.5:1. Your clients' building already exceeds this maximum, as it has a plot ratio of 4.13:1, and it would be increased to 5.09:1 by the proposed extension. Consequently, the council considers that the proposal would involve an over-development of the site. Moreover, it expresses concern about the fenestration proposed for the extension. I agree that this proposed fenestration does not reflect the character of the original building, but, as you say, it matches the window in the existing rear extension. However, the test is whether the proposal would preserve and enhance the character of the Conservation Area. In my opinion, it fails the test since it represents an over-development of the site and uses window details which are inappropriate to the mainly Georgian character of the terrace.

6. I find further cause for concern in the likely effect of the proposed extension on the daylight and sunlight reaching neighbouring properties. The proposal would, in my view, have a serious effect on the light reaching the premises on either side, Nos 7 Coptic Street and 3 Stedham Place. In this respect, you have pointed to the large mixed use development which is currently under construction on the opposite side of Stedham Place, and suggest that this will have an equally adverse effect on neighbouring properties. However, in my opinion this building will not have as severe an effect on its neighbours as would your clients' proposal.

7. I have considered all the other matters raised in the representations, but in my opinion, none are sufficient to outweigh the factors which have led to my decision.

8. For the above reasons, and in exercise of powers transferred to me, I hereby **dismiss** this appeal.

I am Gentlemen
Your obedient Servant

Peter Horridge

P G HORRIDGE BSc DipTP MRTPI ARICS
Inspector