

**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