

Our Ref: 16218/TW/ta
Your Ref: PP-05610933
Email: twilliams@firstplan.co.uk
Date: 10 November 2016

Laura Hazelton
London Borough of Camden 2nd Floor
5 Pancras Square
Town Hall
Judd Street London
WC1H 9JE

Dear Ms Hazelton,

**PLANNING APPLICATION FOR EXTERNAL ALTERATIONS AT BASEMENT LEVEL
NORTHUMBERLAND HOUSE, 303-306 HIGH HOLBORN, WC1V 7JZ**

We are instructed by our client, Barts Charity, to submit an application (via Planning Portal ref: PP-05610933) for external alterations, including the installation of new windows in the rear basement level elevation, and works to refresh the courtyard, at the above office building.

The proposals are required as part of a wider scheme of works intended to refurbish and enhance the existing Class B1 (office) accommodation at basement level. This will have the benefit of optimising the efficient use of the existing floorspace to ensure that the site can make a full contribution to Camden's economy and stock of employment premises.

This application has been the subject of pre-application discussions with Ms Laura Hazelton (Planning Officer – LB Camden) and should be considered concurrently with a proposal for the installation of condensing plant within the rear courtyard (submitted via Planning Portal ref: PP-05610863).

The following documents are submitted in accordance with national and local validation requirements:

- Completed Application Forms;
- Completed CIL Form;
- Site Location Plan (drawing no. PL.001);
- Block Plan (drawing no. PL.002);
- Existing Lower Ground Floor Plan (drawing no. PL.005);
- Existing Rear Elevation (drawing no. PL007);
- Existing Courtyard Elevation (drawing no. PL008);
- Proposed Lower Ground Floor Plan (drawing no. PL015);
- Proposed Rear Elevation (drawing no. PL017);
- Proposed Courtyard Elevation (drawing no. PL018);
- Planning Statement, Design and Access Statement and Heritage Impact Statement included within this letter; and
- Photographs of Site.

The Council's requisite application fee of £195 has been paid online.

Site and Surrounding Area

The application site comprises an eight storey Class B1 (office) building fronting onto High Holborn, situated close to the junction with Chancery Lane, within a commercial area characterised by office and retail uses. A bank and electronic retail shop are situated at ground floor with office accommodation set out over the upper floors with ancillary storage at basement level.

The rear elevation faces onto a courtyard enclosed by a high brick wall, which accommodates existing plant. The elevation features an access door and louvre - the former roller shutters have previously been infilled pursuant to the consents outlined below.

Relevant Planning History

The current office building was constructed pursuant to permission references TP9043/18830 and TP9043/18406 in the late 1950's. In the intervening years, a significant number of applications have been approved but the most relevant to this application is as follows:

9000498 - Erection of a rear extension to basement offices. Approved 19th October 1990.

The plans available online show consent was granted for office space extending across the majority of the rear section of the existing basement floorplate and a large extension, which consumed almost the entire yard. This consent was not implemented.

More recently, applications have been approved for replacement air-conditioning units and works to the front entrance and the rear basement elevation (refs: 2015/1954/P, 2015/2458/P & 2015/4492/P). The works to the rear basement elevation included the removal and infill of two corroded roller shutters.

Application Proposals

The application proposes a scheme of external works to improve the quality of the existing basement office accommodation through the insertion of new windows and works to refresh the courtyard. The proposals will create high quality office space and specifically comprise the following:

Elevational Treatments

- Insertion of three full height powder coated aluminium sliding doors;
- Installation of two powder coated weatherproof louvered grilles to each end of the rear elevation.

Courtyard Treatments

- Installation of new timber decking system, set on rubber shoes and a timber sub-frame over existing concrete courtyard;
- Repainting of existing boundary walls;
- Planting of low level shrubs.

Planning Policy

The statutory development plan comprises the London Plan (2015), Camden Core Strategy 2010-2025 (2010) and the Camden Development Policies 2010-2025 (2010).

The Proposals Map shows that the site is situated within the defined Central London Frontage within the Central London Area and Holborn Growth Area. The site also falls within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area and an Archaeological Priority Area.

The new Camden Local Plan is at submission stage, therefore limited weight can be given to this document.

Camden Core Strategy

Policies CS1 and CS2 seeks to focus growth in the most suitable locations and maximise the efficient use of land and buildings.

Policy CS14 requires that development proposals preserve the character and appearance of heritage assets, including conservation areas and important views.

Development Management Policies

Policy DP13 outlines that land and buildings that are suitable for continued business use will be retained and resisted from changes to non-business uses.

Policies DP24 and DP25 require all development to be of a high quality in design that will preserve and enhance the character and appearance of conservation areas.

Policy DP26 outlines the impact of development on occupiers and neighbours. Developments should take into consideration factors such as privacy, overlooking, noise, sunlight, daylight and artificial light levels.

Draft Camden Local Plan (2016)

Policies E1 and E2 outline that employment premises and sites will be protected where they are suitable for continued business use in order to secure a strong Borough economy.

Other Relevant Guidance

Camden Planning Guidance: Amenity (2011)

The guidance requires that all developments should seek to protect amenity and ensure adequate receipt of sunlight and daylight without adversely affecting surrounding buildings.

Camden Planning Guidance: Design (2014)

The guidance requires that alterations to existing buildings take into account the character and design of the property and its surroundings. New windows should preserve the character of the property in terms of type, glazing patterns and proportions (including the shape, size and placement of glazing bars), opening method, materials and finishes, detailing and the overall size of the window opening. Materials for alterations should weather well, so their ageing process contributes positively to the character of the building, and the site's wider context.

The application proposals are in keeping with the character of the host building and have been carefully designed to accord with the design principles set out within the above guidance.

Planning Assessment

Principle of Development

The application site is an existing and long established office building situated fronting onto High Holborn, and within the Central London Frontage, the Central London area and Holborn Growth Area, where office development is supported.

The existing basement benefits from Class B1 (office) use but is currently used as ancillary storage space in association with the office accommodation on the upper floors. The refurbishment of the underused

basement accommodation, which the application proposals form an important part, will bring the existing floorspace into a more efficient and active use, thereby increasing the Borough's stock of active employment space.

The proposed alterations to the elevation and courtyard are very minor. It is also a material consideration in the determination of this application that the principle of refurbishing and extending the basement to provide additional office space has been established pursuant to the grant of planning permission reference 9000498.

Design and Heritage Statement

The site is situated within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area. The Bloomsbury Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy (2011) states that Northumberland House was designed and constructed by Clyde Young and Bernard Engle between 1957 and 1959. The building is not listed or identified as a heritage asset. The site is not therefore considered to be of historic interest or to make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area.

The proposals are restricted to the rear basement level elevation and are screened from view by an existing wall. Accordingly, the proposed alterations will not be visible from the wider area, including High Holborn at street level.

The proposal includes reinstating fenestration that was removed under a previous planning permission. The replacement windows are of a high quality design and the wider choice of materials for the works in the courtyard are entirely appropriate to the site context.

Overall, the scheme will update and refresh the appearance of the rear elevation in a manner that will protect the character and appearance of the conservation area in accordance with policies CS14 and DP25.

Design and Access Statement

Use

The application seeks permission for improvements to the rear basement elevation and associated yard in order to enhance the quality of the existing office accommodation.

Amount and Scale

The application proposes the installation of three full height sliding doors. The amount is acceptable for the building as it will provide much needed light to the basement office and reinstates previously removed windows.

Additional minor alterations, including decking, and landscaping to the courtyard are of a scale commensurate to the site.

Layout and Appearance

The proposed alterations are restricted to the rear of the site at basement level and situated within an area enclosed by an existing wall. The proposed sliding doors are of a modern design entirely in keeping with the appearance of the host building. The works to the courtyard, including decking and planting will improve the appearance and function of this unattractive and underused space.

Landscaping

The application proposals comprise hard and soft landscaping, including low level planters and decking. This will improve the visual outlook from within the building and create a welcoming break-out space for occupants.

Access

The existing access to the office will remain unchanged from the ground floor street on High Holborn. Safe and clear access to the rear courtyard will be provided from the office space.

Conclusions

This minor application forms part of a scope of works to refurbish and refresh the existing basement office accommodation and rear courtyard at Northumberland House, 303-306 High Holborn. This will allow the premises to make a full contribution to Camden's economy and its stock of employment space.

The proposed rear alterations proposed are minor in scale and will update the tired basement and rear yard. The proposal will have minimal impact on the conservation area as the alterations are confined to the rear of the building which is screened by surrounding buildings. Accordingly, the proposal is in accordance the policies and guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (2012), London Plan (2015), Camden Core Strategy (2010) and Camden Development Policies (2010).

We trust that the enclosed information is sufficient to enable a favourable determination of this application. In the meantime, we look forward to receiving confirmation that the application has been registered.

Yours sincerely,



TIM WILLIAMS
Director

Enc.