

Date: 18/08/2016  
Our ref: 2016/3377/PRE  
Contact: Rachael Parry  
Direct line: 020 7974 1443  
Email: Rachael.Parry@camden.gov.uk

*By email H.Roach@dlgarchitects.com*

**Planning Solutions Team**  
**Planning and Regeneration**  
Culture & Environment  
Directorate  
London Borough of Camden  
Town Hall  
Argyle Street  
London  
WC1H 8EQ

Tel: 020 7974 6750  
Fax: 020 7974 1680  
[planning@camden.gov.uk](mailto:planning@camden.gov.uk)  
[www.camden.gov.uk/planning](http://www.camden.gov.uk/planning)

Dear Helen Roach,

**PRE-APPLICATION PLANNING ADVICE: 29A MONTAGUE STREET**  
**PROPOSAL: INTERNAL ALTERATIONS TO LISTED BUILDING AND INSTALLATION OF PV PANELS**

Thank you for submitting a pre-planning application enquiry for the above site and for meeting with me on the 14<sup>th</sup> July 2016 to discuss the proposals. I hope you will find the below comments useful in determining your approach to the eventual application(s).

1. Proposals in concept form:

Improve general working conditions, facilities and space for staff to include alteration to the internal layout and the installation of PV panels to the roof.

2. Drawings and documents received

- Cover Letter dated 8<sup>th</sup> June 2016
- Initial Heritage Assessment by Anthony Walker June 2016
- Proposed First Floor Plan 4110\_D\_201 Rev 01
- Proposed Ground Floor Plan 4110\_D\_200 Rev 01
- Proposed Demolition First Floor Plan 4110\_D\_101 Rev 01
- Proposed Demolition Ground Floor Plan 4110\_D\_100 Rev 01
- Existing First Floor Plan 4110\_D\_002
- Existing Ground Floor Plan 4110\_D\_001
- Proposed Demolition First Floor Plan – Option A 4110\_D\_101 Rev 04
- Proposed Demolition First Floor Plan – Option B 4110\_D\_102 Rev 04
- Proposed First Floor Plan – Option A 4110\_D\_201 Rev 06
- Proposed First Floor Plan – Option B 4110\_D\_201 Rev 03
- Proposed Roof Plan 4110\_P\_203
- Letter to accompany additional information 4<sup>th</sup> August 2016

3. Site description

The application site relates to No.29a Montague Street, which is a grade II listed building along with the attached wall, railings and lamps which sits within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area.

The list description describes No.29a as a 'Villa with attached lodge, set back from the street in a walled enclosure'. Designed by Thomas Stead and built 1841-3 by William Cubitt and constructed from yellow stock brick with rusticated stone quoins. It has a stucco modillion cornice and blocking course and is of two storeys with 4 windows to the front elevation and recessed side entrance bay.

Alterations have taken place to this building since its construction, including the removal of internal walls at ground floor in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and modification to the rooms at first floor. During the 1970s a modern wing was added which joined the building to the properties facing Great Russell Street. An opening was formed in the southern wall and modification at first floor incorporating the removal of a wall and formation of a shower room.

The Bedford Estates require the improvement and upgrading of existing office working conditions to ensure future use of the site.

It is important that the use of the site remains within the ownership and use by the Bedford Estates, however there are challenges due to minimal areas for extension and the sensitive historic nature of the site.

#### 4. Relevant policies

##### **NPPF (2012)**

Chapter 7 Requiring good design (paragraphs 56-61, 66)

Chapter 12 Conserving and enhancing the historic environment (paragraphs 128-134, 138)

##### **London Plan (2016)**

Policy 7.4 Local character

Policy 7.6 Architecture

Policy 7.8 Heritage assets and archaeology

##### **LDF Core Strategy and Development Policies (2010)**

CS14 Promoting high quality places and conserving our heritage

DP24 Securing high quality design

DP25 Conserving Camden's heritage

DP26 Managing the impact of development on occupiers and neighbours

##### **Supplementary Planning Guidance**

CPG1 Design (2015)

Regents Park Conservation Area Statement (2011)

#### 5. Assessment of proposals

##### 5.1 Ground Floor:

- Amendment to the layout of modern partitions which currently form the WC and kitchen to create an enhanced shower/WC and tea/coffee area. Due to these works not resulting in the loss of historic fabric, the existing being modern interventions and the proposed new being reversible they are considered acceptable. At application stage elevations and sections should be submitted to appreciate the minimal intervention with historic fabric, also confirmation that existing service routes will be utilised
- Existing glass partitions to be removed and this area opened up to create a waiting area and new partitions added to create a meeting room. Due to these works not resulting in the loss of historic fabric, the existing being modern interventions and the proposed new being reversible they are considered acceptable. At application stage elevations and sections should be submitted to appreciate minimal intervention with historic fabric.

##### 5.2 First Floor

Two options have now been put forward for modification at this level which have been discussed during the site visit. The following is taken from most recent correspondence from the architect;

- 'Option A – the removal of the modern partition at the southern end together with opening up the end wall to the first office beside the main staircase and the small section of wall beside the central chimney breast: this no longer works for the number of staff members, as it does not allow sufficient circulation space around the 14no. desks that are required for this area
- Option B – which is preferable, showing the removal of the central chimney breast on the western side of the office; resulting in a more workable space for the 14no. of staff who will share this area. This reflects previous historic alterations on the GF when the western side of the GF was in the form of two rooms which were united to form a single space. The line of metal columns have been checked on the GF and align with the wall along the western side of the store on the FF.'

The submitted information with this pre-app states that the alterations constitute less than substantial harm and in accordance with para 134 of the NPPF the harm has been outweighed by the benefits brought forward by way of securing the business and its viability within its existing location managing the estate which is in close proximity. The building has predominately been in use as the Estate office since its construction and therefore there is a historic attachment between the building and its function, which under

this proposal is to be maintained. The growing nature of the business and the demand for more staff to be located in this office, along with the upgrading and improvements to provide better quality and functioning office space is also brought forward as a benefit.

The options have been considered, following onsite assessment and discussion and it is appreciated that the building has received substantial alteration since its original construction and has lost much of its historic plan form at ground floor. However, it has retained elements at first floor which add to its significance. Option B cannot be supported due to the amount of historic fabric that would be removed, which provides reference to the buildings past use and function, historic plans have been submitted which show the modifications to both floor levels, however substantial amount of fabric and plan form remains at first floor. The works and removal of walls and the chimney breast to the ground floor does not set a precedent for proposals at first floor.

Option A provides less intervention however is still considered to be harmful, again due to the amount of historic fabric being removed.

Although the benefits which are brought forward are seen to ensure the continued use of this building, they are not considered to outweigh the harm caused by the amount of historic fabric proposed to be removed, the proposals at this stage are considered as detrimental to the significance of this listed building and cannot be supported.

A balanced approach could be considered which would;

- Create an enlarged opening between the proposed rooms; 'reception' and 'Elizabeth's Office', however investigative works would need to take place to appreciate the fabric. Historic floor plans show that alteration has taken place in the past in this location; therefore there may be more scope to make changes here. Any works however should be minimal and result in the retention of historic detailing (cornices etc.) by way of substantial nibs and downstand.
- Removal of the wall adjacent to 'Marks office'; historic plans show that this is not in a location as per the historic plan form and is considered a modern addition and would not involve loss of historic fabric, or impact on the historic plan form. This however should still be justified further at application stage.

It is important to note that this is a grade II listed building, listed in its own right and not associated to or constructed in style or form which matches adjacent properties, unlike many other residential dwellings in this location of a similar age. This adds to its significance and as such it is important to retain as much of the original fabric, character, appearance, details and plan form. It is appreciated that the existing use is under extreme pressures and the way the building is used is changing. The suggested 'balanced approach' above will hopefully be a solution that allows upgrading to the office use and maintains the buildings special interest.

### 5.3 PV Panels

The PV panels are proposed to be sited upon the flat roof of the main building behind the existing brick parapets and set in movable trays which would have no connection with the roof. The principle of this element of the proposals can be supported subject to further information and justification being submitted;

- which ensures that the installation would have minimal views of them resulting in minimal impact upon the setting of the listed building.
- Photomontages should also be submitted to ensure the panels would have minimal visibility/impact upon the surrounding area, adjacent listed buildings and the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.
- Detail of the panels – size, material, finish, colour, sections, elevations - preferably black panels
- Section details to show the panels sitting within and beneath the parapet to appreciate if their height would protrude above the parapet
- Assurance that the additional loading will not impact the main structure of the building

A condition would be added to an approval to ensure that the panels are removed once no longer in use.

Planning Permission may be required for the panels, please see the Planning Portal for additional information;

[https://www.planningportal.co.uk/info/200130/common\\_projects/51/solar\\_panels/2](https://www.planningportal.co.uk/info/200130/common_projects/51/solar_panels/2)

Listed building consent / planning application information

It is appreciated that the proposals at this stage are in the early design stages; hopefully by way of the above comments and discussions on site you are now in a position to further develop these concepts. I have also outlined what additional detail would need to be provided at application stage for validation or if you wish for follow-up pre-app advice.

Please note that in addition to the required listed building consent for the changes detailed in this pre-application submission, planning permission may be required for the PV panels. Please note that no advice has been provided in respect of planning and if you wish to submit an application please see [supporting information for planning applications](#) on the Camden website.

We are legally required to consult on applications with individuals who may be affected by the proposals. We would usually notify neighbours by letter, put up a notice on or near the site and, advertise in a local newspaper. The Council must allow 21 days from the consultation start date for responses to be received.

It is likely that a proposal of this size would be determined under delegated powers, however, if more than 3 objections from neighbours or an objection from a local amenity group is received the application will be referred to the Members Briefing Panel should it be recommended for approval by officers. For more details click [here](#).

**Please note that this email represents an initial informal officer view of your proposals based on the information available to us at this stage and would not be binding upon the Council, nor can it be held to prejudice formal determination of any planning application we receive from you on this proposal.**

If you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact me directly.

**Thank you for using Camden's pre-application advice.**

Kind Regards,

Rachael Parry  
**Conservation and Design Officer**

Telephone: 020 7974 1443

*Please note that the information contained in this email represents an officer's opinion and is without prejudice to further consideration of this matter by the Development Management section or to the Council's formal decision.*