

<b>Delegated Report</b>		<b>Analysis sheet</b>	<b>Expiry Date:</b>	10/01/2017
		N/A / attached	<b>Consultation Expiry Date:</b>	22/12/2016
<b>Officer</b>			<b>Application Number(s)</b>	
Evelyn Jones			2016/6272/P	
<b>Application Address</b>			<b>Drawing Numbers</b>	
4-5 Bernard Street, London WC1N 1JU			LC/BS/12, LC/BS/13	
<b>PO 3/4</b>	<b>Area Team Signature</b>	<b>C&amp;UD</b>	<b>Authorised Officer Signature</b>	
<b>Proposal(s)</b>				
Removal of front railings and infill of lightwells				
<b>Recommendation(s):</b>		Refuse Planning Permission		
<b>Application Type:</b>		Full Planning Permission		

Conditions or Reasons for Refusal:	Refer to Decision Notice					
Informatives:						
Consultations						
Adjoining Occupiers:	No. notified	00	No. of responses	01	No. of objections	01
Summary of consultation responses:	<p>A site notice was erected on 29/11/2016 A press notice was published on 01/12/2016</p> <p>One objection was received from a neighbouring resident from Flat 2, 5A Bernard Street objecting on the following grounds: The railings are an in-keeping feature of the Grade II listed terraces within Bernard Street. Officer comment: see paragraph 2.4 of the report</p> <p>The objector also raised concerns that if this application were to be approved, the potential for an application for tables and chairs would subsequently follow. As this is not included in this application this comment cannot be taken into consideration.</p>					
CAAC/Local groups* comments:	<p><u>Bloomsbury CAAC</u> The buildings are positive contributors to the conservation area. The railings and basements are an important facet of the character of the area. The proposed removal of the lightwell would be contrary to the measures taken by the council in the previous application (2016/2605/P) to reduce the impact on the conservation area by way of the retention of the lightwell, the removal of a proposed external seating area, de-cluttering of the shopfront design, alterations to the design and access steps into the restaurant. The removal of the railings would be inconsistent with Camden’s previous intervention at the site.</p> <p>Officer comment: see paragraph 2.4 of the report</p>					

## Site Description

The site comprises two four storey 19<sup>th</sup> century townhouses forming part of a small terrace adjacent to Russell Square Underground Station with commercial units to the ground floor level and residential to the upper floors. The buildings have been identified as positive contributors within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area and the adjacent Russell Square Underground Station is a Grade II listed building.

## Relevant History

### 4 Bernard Street

PS9604301 – Certificate of lawfulness (existing) for the use as a residential flat. Granted 23/01/1997

8602099 – Installation of a ventilation duct at rear. Granted 12/02/1987

9501230 – Certificate of lawfulness of existing use of second floor as a residential flat. Granted 13/10/1995

### 5 Bernard Street

2016/2605/P - Replacement of existing shopfront and awning to restaurant. Granted 06/09/2016

2016/2635/A – Display of externally illuminated fascia and projecting signs. Granted 06/09/2016

### 4-5 Bernard Street

2016/1672/P – Use as a restaurant/café (classA3) at ground floor and basement levels. Granted 21/04/2016

## Relevant policies

### London Plan 2016

### NPPF 2012

### LDF Core Strategy and Development Policies

CS3 Other highly accessible areas

CS5 Managing the Impact of Growth and Development

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

### Camden Planning Guidance (CPG)

### CPG1 Design (2015)

### Bloomsbury Conservation Area Appraisal (Adopted 2011)

## Assessment

### 1. The proposal

- 1.1. The proposal involves the removal of the existing railings to the front of the building and the infilling of the associated lightwells.

### 2. Assessment

- 2.1. The main planning consideration of the proposal is the impact the removal of the railings and infilling of the lightwells would have on the properties and the surrounding area and whether the proposal would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area.
- 2.2. Policy DP24 states that all development should consider the character, setting, context and form and scale of neighbouring buildings and the quality of materials to be used. Policy DP25 states that development shall only be permitted within conservation areas that preserves and enhances the character and appearance of the area.
- 2.3. The Bloomsbury Conservation Area Appraisal identifies properties within the Russell Square area as having a strong consistency in the architectural vocabulary of the original terraced development. This includes properties being of either three or four storey in height with a basement below street level with iron railings to the frontage.
- 2.4. The properties form part of a terrace of four storey townhouses with basement lightwells and railings, briefly interrupted by the Grade II listed Russell Square Underground Station. While many properties, including the subject site, have replaced the railings to the front with modern railings, the feature remains consistent within the streetscene and the loss of the railings would be considered detrimental to the character and appearance of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area.
- 2.5. The CAAMS acknowledges the issues currently facing the conservation area and highlights the loss of original details such as frontage railings as the type of alteration which can have a detrimental impact, either cumulatively or individually, on the character and appearance of the area.
- 2.6. The remainder of the southern side of the street remains in domestic use and is listed, while the two houses in question have had their ground floors converted for commercial use and are not listed. Although the lightwell areas have both been partially bridged, their continued existence, in conjunction with the position of the front doors to the flats above, reveals their domestic origins and allows them to be read as part of the terrace at street level. Consequently, the loss of the railed areas and infilling of the lightwells would contribute the erosion of historic fabric and detail and so would be to the detriment of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area.

### 3. Recommendation

- 3.1. The proposed removal of railings and infilling of lightwells would be detrimental to the character and appearance of the host properties, street scene and the wider area and Bloomsbury Conservation Area through contrary to policy CS14 of the Camden Core Strategy, DP25 of the Camden Development Policies, The London Plan, The NPPF and the Bloomsbury Conservation Area Appraisal.