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|---|----------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|------------|
| <b>Delegated Report</b>                                 |                            | <b>Analysis sheet</b>   | <b>Expiry Date:</b>                 | 11/01/2017 |
|   |                            | N/A / attached  | <b>Consultation Expiry Date:</b>    | 29/12/2016 |
| <b>Officer</b>  |                            |   | <b>Application Number(s)</b>        |            |
| John Diver  |                            |   | 2016/6305/P                         |            |
| <b>Application Address</b>                              |                            |   | <b>Drawing Numbers</b>              |            |
| 12 Gower Mews<br>London<br>WC1E 6HP                     |                            |   | <i>See decision notice</i>          |            |
| <b>PO 3/4</b>   | <b>Area Team Signature</b> | <b>C&amp;UD</b>   | <b>Authorised Officer Signature</b> |            |
|   |                            |   |                                     |            |
| <b>Proposal(s)</b>                                      |                            |   |                                     |            |
| Installation of bi-folding garage doors (retrospective) |                            |   |                                     |            |
| <b>Recommendation:</b>                                  |                            | Refuse planning permission and Enforcement Action to be Taken |                                     |            |
| <b>Application Type:</b>                                |                            | Full Planning Permission                                      |                                     |            |

|   |  |           |                   |           |
|---|--|-----------|-------------------|-----------|
| <b>Conditions or Reasons for Refusal:</b> | <b>Refer to Decision Notice</b>  |           |                   |           |
| <b>Informatives:</b>                      |  |           |                   |           |
| <b>Consultations</b>                      |  |           |                   |           |
| <b>Adjoining Occupiers:</b>               | No. of responses   | <b>01</b> | No. of objections | <b>00</b> |
| <b>Summary of consultation:</b>           | <p>A site notice was displayed near to the site on 02/12/2016 (consultation end date 23/12/2016).</p> <p>The development was also advertised in the local press on 08/12/2016 (consultation end date 29/12/2016).</p> <p>No.1 letter of comment was received from a member of the public (address Ashford, Kent, TN27 8EQ). The comments raised can be summarised as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work appears to have already been carried out and application should be retrospective.</li> </ul> <p><u>Officer's response:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>In response to this comment, a second site visit was completed to the site where it was found that works had been implemented without permission. The description for the development was amended to read 'retrospective'.</i></li> </ul> |           |                   |           |
| <b>Bloomsbury CAAC:</b>                   | <p>No response following consultation request.</p> <p><u>Officer's Note:</u><br/> <i>It is pertinent to note that during the previous planning application (2015/6593/P) which initially proposed the same alterations to the garage doors, the Bloomsbury CAAC objected on grounds including that the "Proposed ground floor doors and windows will appear incongruous on entering the mews from Gower Street and will detract from the group setting". This comment was submitted prior to the previous scheme being amended in order to address this concern in order to maintain the previously existing doors.</i></p>  |           |                   |           |

## Site Description

The application site contains a mews property on the south side of Gower Mews, WC13 6HP. The mews properties would have originally been constructed as ancillary dwellings to the adjacent properties along Bedford Square, however many have been historically annexed and now host self-contained units at first and second floor levels (most properties benefit from mansard roof extensions) with garages at ground floor.

The application site is located within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area. The Bloomsbury Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy document (adopted 2011) describes the row of properties as follows: "To the south [of Gower Mews], is a consistent and simple two-storey mews terrace dating from the 19th century, which has garages at ground-floor level, vertically proportioned first-floor windows, and small dormer windows in the mansard attic storey". This document additionally includes the application property (and the row within which it sits) as making a positive contribution to the Conservation Area.

The application property is not statutorily listed (having been rebuilt in the 1980's) however it immediately abuts the grade 1 listed row of nos.12-27 Bedford Square to the rear. The other mews properties within the row (nos.12a-20) which were not rebuilt are considered to be listed by virtue of their siting within the curtilage of the listed buildings to the South. This is not disputed by the applicants, who have recently submitted a listed building consent application for the neighbouring property (12a – see below section). There are no Article 4 Directives which have been applied to the application site.

## Relevant History

A summary of the site's planning history is as follows:

**Address:** 12 Gower Mews, London, WC1E 6HP

**Application No.:** 2016/5369/P

**Application Type:** Non-material amendment

**Description:** Amendment to scheme approved under reference 2015/6593/P dated 07/03/16 for 'conversion of ground floor garage into habitable room & associated alterations to front elevation' including the variation of front door design / opening method.

**Date of Determination:** 03/11/2016

**Decision:** Refused

*Reasons for refusal:*

(1) *The proposed amendments would result in a significant variation to the exterior of the garage door, materially affecting its appearance and opening style, and therefore cannot be considered 'non-material' to the original planning permission ref: 2015/6593/P dated 07/03/16*

**Address:** 12 Gower Mews, London, WC1E 6HP

**Application No.:** 2015/6593/P

**Description:** Conversion of ground floor garage into habitable room & associated alterations to front elevation. Internal alterations.

**Date of Determination:** 07/03/2016

**Decision:** Granted

*It should be noted that the original submission for this application included the replacement of the existing garage doors with full height bi-folds. This change was considered to be harmful and the applicants were advised that their application would be refused unless they revised the scheme in order to retain these characteristic doors. The scheme was revised as such prior to the approval being issued.*

**Address:** 21/25 Bedford Square and 11/12 Gower Mews, WC1.

**Application No.:** PL/8800180 & HB/8870076/

**Description:** Renovation of main buildings 21-25 Bedford Square and rebuilding of house at 12 Gower Mews and building of rear office extensions to 21, 22, 24 and 25 Bedford Square and alterations to 11 Gower Mews.

**Date of Determination:** 28/10/1988

**Decision:** Granted permission and Listed Building Consent

**Address:** 12 Gower Mews W.C.1.

**Application No.:** CTP/N13/21/H/14666

**Description:** Continued use of first floor of 12 Gower Mews W.C.1. as offices

**Date of Determination:** 17/11/1972

**Decision:** Refused

*Reason(s) for Refusal:*

(1) *The proposal does not accord with the Initial Development Plan in which the area is zoned for West End purposes and the use as proposed would tend to prevent the ultimate implementation of the Plan.*

(2) *To ensure that the future occupation of the building shall be in accordance with the Council's policy on the restriction of office growth and prevention of loss of residential accommodation in the Central Area as set out in the Statement of Initial Development Plan.*

**Address:** 12 Gower Mews W.C.1.

**Application No.:** CTP/N13/21/10/10260

**Description:** Change of use for a limited period of the first floor, 12 Gower Mews W.C.1. from residential to offices purposes.

**Date of Determination:** 25/03/1971

**Decision:** Grant temporary use (12 Months)

Other relevant history:

12a Gower Mews W.C.1. (immediately adjacent to application site)

**Application No.:** 2016/3765/P & 2016/4101/L

**Application Type:** Full planning and listed buildings consent

**Description:** Internal alterations to facilitate conversion of existing dwelling (C3) into 2x self-contained dwellings (1x 1bed, 2 person and 1 x 2bed, 4person). Installation of roof light and alteration of front garage doors.

**Date of Determination:** At the time of writing the local planning authority had finalised their recommendations but the legal agreement was yet to be signed/ finalised

**Decision:** Granted Subject to a Section 106 Legal Agreement & Grant Listed building consent

*Similarly to application 2015/6593/P, the applicants were advised that the scheme would not be acceptable if it would involve the loss of the front garage doors. The scheme was thus redesigned accordingly to retain the existing doors and match the approved scheme next door.*

## Relevant policies

### National Planning Policy Framework (2012)

#### The London Plan 2016

Policy 3.14 – Existing housing

Policy 7.4 – Local character

Policy 7.5 – Public realm

Policy 7.6 – Architecture

Policy 7.8 – Heritage assets and archaeology

### LDF Core Strategy and Development Policies (2011)

#### LDF Core Strategy (2010)

CS1 - Distribution of Growth

CS5 – Managing the impact of growth and development

CS14 – Promoting high quality places and conserving our heritage

#### Development Policies (2010)

DP19 - Managing the impact of parking

DP24 – Securing high quality design

DP25 – Conserving Camden’s heritage

DP26 – Managing the impact of development on occupiers and neighbours

### Camden Planning Guidance 2013

CPG1: Design (2015)

CPG2: Housing (2016)

CPG6: Amenity (2011)

### Bloomsbury Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy (2011)

#### Part 1:

*Section 3.0 – Summary of Special Interest (Pages 5 – 11)*

*Section 5.0 – Sub Area 5: Bedford Square/Gower Street (Pages 38 – 43)*

#### Part 2:

*Section 3.0 – Maintaining Character (Page 109)*

*Section 4.0 – Management of Change (Pages 116 – 128)*

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1. Planning permission has recently been granted for the conversion of the ground floor garages of the property into a habitable room with associated alterations to front elevation and internal works. As outlined in the planning history section of the report, this application is essentially a resubmission following the approval of planning application 2015/6593/P dated 03/11/2016, with the only variation between that which was approved and that which is hereby proposed being the proposed replacement of the garage door to the front of the property.
- 1.2. The hereby proposed doors would now be full height bi-folds (rather than previously sat within the larger the pair of coach doors as approved) and would include smaller hinges applied for decorative purposes only rather than retaining the larger and functioning Collinge hinges as approved.
- 1.3. During a second site visit completed on the 06 January 2017, it was discovered that the works proposed (i.e. the replacement of the garage doors with full height bi-folding doors) had been completed. This application therefore seeks retrospective permission for these works.

### 2. Planning Appraisal

- 2.1. The principal considerations material to the determination of this application are as follows:
  - Principle of the loss of the ground floor garage use
  - The visual impact upon the character and appearance of the host property, adjacent listed buildings, local area and the Bloomsbury Conservation Area (Design and Conservation)
  - The living standards for future residents of the self-contained unit (Standard of accommodation)
  - The impacts caused upon the residential amenities of any neighbouring occupier (Residential Amenity)
- 2.2. As planning application 2015/6593/P dated 07/03/2016 approved the change of use of the ground floor garage into a habitable room and is still valid, most elements of the development have been previously established and are not objectionable. This includes the principle of the loss of the ground floor garages; an assessment of the standard of accommodation provided as well as an assessment of impacts upon residential amenity (the revised door design is not considered to lead to any additional impacts to residential amenity).
- 2.3. The only outstanding consideration is therefore whether the retention of the bi-fold front doors as installed (and the loss of the pre-existing coach doors) results in an unacceptable impact upon the character and appearance of the host property, adjacent listed buildings, local area or the Bloomsbury Conservation Area.

#### Design and Conservation

##### Local policy background

- 2.4. The Council's design policies are aimed at achieving the highest standard of design in all developments. The following considerations contained within policy DP24 are relevant to the application: development should consider the character, setting, context and the form and scale of neighbouring buildings, and the quality of materials to be used. Policy DP25 'Conserving Camden's Heritage' states that within conservation areas, the Council will only grant permission for development that 'preserves and enhances' its established character and appearance. Policy DP25 continues to state that in order to preserve or enhance the borough's listed buildings, the Council will not permit development that it considers would cause harm to the setting of a listed building.
- 2.5. Sections 3 (Heritage) and 4 (Extensions, alterations and conservatoires) of the Council's CPG1 (Design) provides more detailed guidance on the Council's approach to protecting and enriching the range of features that make up our built heritage and the character of the build environment. Regarding proposals to alter doors or doorways, this CPG states that characteristic doorway features should such be retained where they make a positive contribution to the character of groups of buildings, and that replacement doors should match the dimensions, proportions, joinery details, panelling and glazing of the original (para.4.7).

2.6. The Bloomsbury Conservation Area appraisal and management strategy advises that alterations can have a detrimental impact either cumulatively or individually on the character and appearance of the conservation area. This documents provides examples of works regarding alterations to existing buildings which are considered to be particularly harmful to the character of the conservation area including; the use of inappropriate materials/ inappropriately detailed doors and windows as well as the loss of original details (para.5.4.)

### Discussion

2.7. The significance; character and appearance of the mews in question is fundamental to the proper assessment of the impact of the proposed retention of works. A historic mew typology includes a number of key façade or fenestration elements to the ground floor which are found in all traditional central London mews properties. This includes (but is not limited too);

- 1) A pair of coach door below large bressummer
- 2) ...supported typically by large Lambeth Collinge hinges to carry the weight of the heavy timber doors
- 3) A separate entrance door for the residential accommodation above.

2.8. Due to significant bomb damage, the northern row of mews properties was fully rebuilt circa 1946 and many of their original features at ground floor level were not replaced. Conversely despite various alterations including demolition and rebuilds (with the application site being rebuilt in the 1980's), the properties along the Southern row of mews properties all retained characteristic features including points 1-3 and the row is made up of a largely consistent set of mew properties. The uniformity of form, character and appearance as well as detailing within this row provides a high quality group of traditional properties which can be easily identified and appreciated. This cohesion in appearance along the row subsequently contributes greatly to the character of the local area (as confirmed by the designation as such within the conservation area statement).

2.9. The completed works have acted to fundamentally alter characteristics 1 and 2 from the above list by removing the pair of coach doors and drastically stunting the length of the hinges. The proportions of the doors have been changed and the fundamental traditional architectural language and historic interest of the property has been affected. Although it is acknowledged that the pre-existing coach doors were not original, it is considered that the works have led to an erosion of quality and loss of architectural detail which has harmed the traditional and established character of the mews property as well as led to a reduction in uniformity along the row.

2.10. The installed bi-fold doors also introduce a completely alien form of opening style into the row which, due to the fact that the ground floor space is now in use as a habitable room, are likely to be left open whenever in use to maximise natural light (as they were during the site visit). In addition, with the installed bi-folds now full height, the secondary glazing and bulky framing within becomes much more exposed than as was approved. This includes the white metal framing which is not of high quality, and means that the appearance of the property is drastically altered. As previously approved, even with the bi-folding sections fully opened, the top (with original fanlight) and bottom sections of the coach doors would have masked the majority of framing to the screen, maintained the overall proportions and appearance of the coach doors and therefore minimising the visual impact of these openable elements.

2.11. The final detailing of the doors has exacerbated this issue, with the material utilised failing to maintain the characteristic grain of the timber on other coach doors and a matt, rather than gloss paint being applied. This materiality of the replacement doors is considered to have caused a significant loss of patina and detailing which greatly contributed to the character of the mews property. Overall the replaced doors are very obviously modern additions which read as being vastly distinct from the remaining coach doors within the row and have weakened the identity and character of the property as a mews dwelling.

2.12. Above all, the southern row of mews properties in question had previously maintained a scarcely seen level of consistency and uniformity which formed its historic and architectural value and townscape significance. The works completed have acted to diminish this uniformity and cause harm to the setting of the adjacent listed group of mews houses, character and appearance of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area and group of properties by unsettling the unification of group.

2.13. The Council's clear preference to retain the coach doors had been outlined since the beginning of 2016

when the initial application was received, and officers had worked proactively with the applicants in order to design a system which would allow for the installation of inset bi-folds (set within the coach doors, between the Collinge hinges) in order to improve their use for residential purposes whilst retaining the characteristic coach doors. This design was agreed as the bi-folds could be installed whilst retaining the original appearance of the coach doors as well as their opening style, with smaller bi-folds inserted. This approach was then re-confirmed via the refusal of non-material amendment application 2016/5369/P.

- 2.14. In accordance with paragraph 134 of the NPPF, "Where a development proposal 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 viable use".
- 2.15. In this instance the completed works are considered to have caused to less than substantial harm to the significance of two heritage assets (the adjacent row of listed mews properties as well as the Bloomsbury Conservation Area) and the resulting benefit being a private gain only (i.e. the improved light at ground floor level and ease of access for residents of the mews property). On this basis the scheme is considered to fail this test and it is the view of the Council that the coach doors of the property should be returned to the as approved design, or their original form.

### **3. Recommendation**

#### **3.1. a) Refuse planning permission**

##### **b) Authorise enforcement action**

That the Borough Solicitor be instructed to issue an Enforcement Notice under Section 172 of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990 as amended and to pursue any legal action necessary to secure compliance and officers be authorised in the event of non-compliance, to prosecute under section 179 or appropriate power and/or take direct action under 178 in order to secure the cessation of the breach of planning control.

##### **The Notice shall allege the following breach of planning control:**

The unauthorised replacement of front garage/coach doors located on the front elevation of the property.

##### **The Notice shall require within a period of 3 calendar months of the Notice taking effect:**

- 1) Remove the unauthorised garage doors located on the front elevation; and either
- 2) - Reinstate doors to replicate the original; or
  - Reinstate doors to match the approved doors (ref: 2015/6593/P dated 07/03/2016) as shown on drawing (Prefix: 317\_00\_) 00A, 01, 02, 03; (Prefix: 317\_01\_) 01A, 02, 04, 05.

##### **REASONS WHY THE COUNCIL CONSIDERS IT EXPEDIENT TO ISSUE THE NOTICE.**

- The loss of the existing coach doors and Collinge hinges and their replacement with full height bi-folding doors, by virtue of the scale, location and detailed design will have a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the host building, would appear as incongruous additions within the row of mew properties and results in harm to the setting of the adjacent listed buildings and the character and appearance of the wider Bloomsbury Conservation area, contrary to policy CS14 (Promoting high quality places and conserving our heritage) of the London Borough of Camden Local Development Core Strategy; and DP24 (Securing high quality design) and DP25 (Conserving Camden's heritage) of the London Borough of Camden Local Development Framework Development Policies.