

GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY

Development, Enterprise and Environment

Bethany Cullen

Regeneration and Planning
Development Management
London Borough of Camden
Town Hall
Judd Street
LONDON WC1H 9JE

Our ref: D&P/4001/SK

Your ref: 2017/0618/P

Date: 24 April 2017

Dear Ms Cullen,

Town & Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended); Greater London Authority Acts 1999 and 2007; Town & Country Planning (Mayor of London) Order 2008

Castlewood House and Medius House

Local planning authority reference: 2017/0618/P

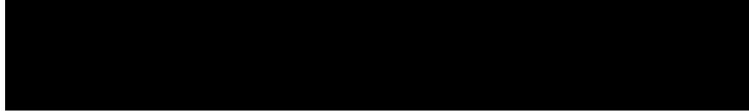
I refer to the copy of the above planning application, which was received from you on 24 February 2017. On 24 April 2017, the Mayor considered a report on this proposal; reference D&P/4001/01. A copy of the report is attached, in full. This letter comprises the statement that the Mayor is required to provide under Article 4(2) of the Order.

The Mayor considers that the application does not comply with the London Plan, for the reasons set out in paragraph 46 of the above-mentioned report; but that the possible remedies set out in that paragraph could address these deficiencies.

If your Council subsequently resolves to make a draft decision on the application, it must consult the Mayor again under Article 5 of the Order and allow him fourteen days to decide whether to allow the draft decision to proceed unchanged, or direct the Council under Article 6 to refuse the application, or issue a direction under Article 7 that he is to act as the local planning authority for the purpose of determining the application and any connected application. You should therefore send me a copy of any representations made in respect of the application, and a copy of any officer's report, together with a statement of the decision your authority proposes to make, and (if it proposed to grant permission) a statement of any conditions the authority proposes to impose and a draft of any planning obligation it proposes to enter into and details of any proposed planning contribution.

Please note that the Transport for London case officer for this application is George Snape, georgesnape@tfl.gov.uk.

Yours sincerely,



Colin Wilson

Senior Manager – Development & Projects

cc Tony Devenish, London Assembly Constituency Member and Chair of London Assembly
Planning Committee
National Planning Casework Unit, DCLG
Lucinda Turner, TfL

24 April 2017

Castlewood House and Medius House

in the London Borough of Camden

planning application no. 2017/0618/P

Strategic planning application stage 1 referral

Town & Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended); Greater London Authority Acts 1999 and 2007; Town & Country Planning (Mayor of London) Order 2008.

The proposal

Demolition of Castlewood House and erection of an eleven storey office building (Class B1) with retail and restaurant uses (Class A1/A3) at ground floor level; enlargement of existing double basement level and formation of roof terraces and rooftop plant along with associated works. Partial demolition of Medius House with retention of the existing facade, and erection of a two storey roof extension including private roof terrace, in connection with the change of use of the building from office (Class B1) and retail (Class A1) to provide twenty affordable housing units (Class C3) at upper floor levels with retained retail use at ground floor level.

The applicant

The applicant is **Royal London Mutual Insurance Society** and the agent is **Gerald Eve LLP**.

Strategic issues

Principle of development: provision of commercial and residential accommodation supported. Provision of affordable workspace should be assessed in the context of scheme viability (Paras 15-18).

Housing: provision of 100% affordable housing is strongly supported. GLA officers will review the viability assessment to ensure the maximum reasonable amount of housing is delivered. (Paras 19-26).

Climate change: further information required regarding overall energy performance. Additional drainage/green infrastructure mitigation measures required (Paras 34-35).

Transport: various s106 obligations and transport plans required, including cycle hire expansion, Legible London, and bus infrastructure. (Paras 36-42).

Recommendation

That Camden Council be advised that while the application is broadly acceptable in strategic planning terms, the application does not comply with the London Plan, with the reasons and remedies set out in paragraph 46 of this report.

Context

1 On 24 February 2017 the Mayor of London received documents from Camden Council notifying him of a planning application of potential strategic importance to develop the above site for the above uses. Under the provisions of The Town & Country Planning (Mayor of London) Order 2008 the Mayor has until 6 April 2017 to provide the Council with a statement setting out whether he considers that the application complies with the London Plan, and his reasons for taking that view. The Mayor may also provide other comments. This report sets out information for the Mayor's use in deciding what decision to make.

2 The application is referable under Categories 1B and 1C of the Schedule to the Order 2008:

- 1B(b): *"Development (other than development which only comprises the provision of houses, flats, or houses and flats) which comprises or includes the erection of a building or buildings in Central London (other than the City of London) and with a total floorspace of more than 20,000 square metres."*
- 1C: *"Development which comprises or includes the erection of a building of one or more of the following descriptions — the building is more than 30 metres high and is outside the City of London."*

3 Once Camden Council has resolved to determine the application, it is required to refer it back to the Mayor for his decision as to whether to direct refusal; take it over for his own determination; or allow the Council to determine it itself.

4 The Mayor of London's statement on this case will be made available on the GLA website www.london.gov.uk.

Site description

5 The site comprises two existing commercial buildings on New Oxford Street; Castlewood House, 77-91 New Oxford Street and Medius House, 63-69 New Oxford Street. Although two separate sites, they are referred to collectively as the application site for the purposes of this report. The site is located in the middle of the Tottenham Court Road area, which is undergoing major redevelopment with the arrival of Crossrail in 2018, and is almost an island site with edges on to New Oxford Street, Earnshaw Street, Bucknall Street and Dyott Street.

6 Castlewood House is currently in B1 office use, providing 13,099 sq.m. GEA of commercial floor space over nine storeys. Medius House comprises 652 sq.m. GEA of A1 retail at ground floor and 1,610 sq.m. GEA of B1 office floor space over five upper floors.

7 It is on the Strategic Road Network (New Oxford Street) and approximately one kilometre from the closest section of the Transport for London Road Network (Victoria Embankment). Seventeen bus routes stop nearby and Tottenham Court Road (London Underground) station is 150 metres away. Consequently the site has excellent public transport accessibility, as shown by a PTAL rating of 6b, the highest possible. Public transport will be further improved when Elizabeth Line services commence at Tottenham Court Road station next year. There is a Cycle Hire docking station with 18 docking points on the footway on Earnshaw Street fronting the site. There is a local cycle route running along New Oxford Street.

8 Centre Point, the Grade II listed tower, is located to the west of the site and Central Saint Giles to the immediate south. The site is also located between the four distinct Conservation Areas of Bloomsbury (to the south), Fitzrovia (to the southeast), Soho (to the northeast) and Covent Garden (to the northwest). The site sits adjacent to the Bloomsbury Conservation Area and whilst the site is not listed, Medius House is considered to be a 'positive contributor' to the conservation area as set out in the Council's Management Strategy April 2011.

Details of the proposal

9 The proposal is to demolish and replace Castlewood House with a new mixed-use ten storey building, plus ground floor and two basement levels. A total of up to 2,304 (GEA) of retail floorspace will be provided across the ground and lower ground levels, and 18,905 (GEA) of office (B1) floorspace will be provided across the lower ground level, ground and upper floors.

10 Medius House will be retained, refurbished and extended by 2 additional storeys and developed within a retained facade providing up to twenty new affordable homes. The existing retail floorspace on the ground floor will be retained providing a total of 525sq.m. (GEA) of retail floorspace.

11 Substantial improvements are also proposed to the public realm within and surrounding the site, which will include a new pedestrian route linking New Oxford Street to Bucknall Street, and a new public place on Earnshaw Street.

Case history

A pre-application meeting was held at City Hall in 21 June 2016 in relation, an advice report was issued on 2 August 2016. At the pre-application stage, the proposal to deliver 100% affordable housing and an uplift in commercial space was supported. At that time, further work was required to be undertaken in terms of clarifying housing provision, residential quality, density calculations, amenity space, inclusive access, sustainable development and transport.

Strategic planning issues and relevant policies and guidance

12 The relevant issues and corresponding policies are as follows:

- Principle of use/mix of uses London Plan; Central Activities Zone SPG
- Housing London Plan; Housing SPG; Providing for Children and Young People's Play and Informal Recreation SPG; draft Housing SPG;
- Urban design London Plan;
- Inclusive access London Plan; Accessible London: achieving an inclusive environment SPG;
- Sustainable development London Plan; Sustainable Design and Construction SPG; Mayor's Climate Change Adaptation Strategy; Mayor's Climate Change Mitigation and Energy Strategy; Mayor's Water Strategy
- Transport London Plan; the Mayor's Transport Strategy
- Crossrail London Plan; Mayoral Community Infrastructure Levy;

13 For the purposes of Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the development plan in force for the area is the Camden Core Strategy, 2010, the Camden Development Policies (2010); and the London Plan 2016.

14 The following are also relevant material considerations:

- National Planning Policy Framework and the accompanying National Planning Practice Guidance.
- The draft Camden Local Plan (2015).
- The Tottenham Court Road Station and St Giles High Street Area Planning Framework (2004).

Principle of development

15 London Plan policies 2.10 and 4.3 establish the importance of the Central Activities Zone as one of the world's most attractive and competitive business locations, whilst supporting its rich mix of local and strategic uses. A summary of the existing and proposed land use components and floor space is set out in tables 1 below:

Table 1: Summary of the cumulative land use and floor space at the site

Land use	Existing (GEA)	Proposed (GEA)	Net change (GEA)
Office	14,709 sq.m.	18,905 sq.m.	+ 4,196 sq.m.
Retail	652 sq.m..	2,829 sq.m	+ 2,177 sq.m.
Residential	0 sq.m.	2,147 sq.m.	+ 2, 147 sq.m.
Total	15, 361 sq.m.	23,881 sq.m.	+ 8,520 sq.m.

16 The proposals provide an overall uplift of 4,196 sq.m. of office floorspace, with a 2,177 sq.m. uplift in retail. The qualitative and quantitative improvements in office and retail provision fully accords with strategic policy, and is strongly supported.

17 The provision of twenty residential units responds positively to London Plan Policy 4.3 which seeks mixed-use developments, to include housing, and accords with London Plan Policy 3.3, which seeks to increase London's housing supply.

18 Whilst the proposed mix of uses is strongly supported, the applicant should explore opportunities to provide affordable workspace in accordance with London Plan policies 4.1 and 4.10, which seek to ensure that a full range of spaces, including affordable workspace and affordable retail, are delivered as part of redevelopment proposals. GLA officers will work with the applicant and the Council to secure appropriate provision of affordable space, in the context of a review of scheme viability (as discussed in paragraphs 23-24 below).

Affordable housing

19 The residential element of the proposal will be situated in Medius House and comprises twenty affordable housing units, 60% of which are proposed to be social rent, with 40% intermediate. A summary of the affordable residential provision is set out in table 2 below:

Table 2: proposed unit mix

Tenure	Habitable rooms	Affordable rent	Intermediate	Total
1 bed	Studio/1 person	1	4	5
	2 person	4	0	4
2 bed	3 person	3	3	6
	4 person	1	1	2
3 bed	5 person	3	0	3
TOTAL		12(60%)	8 (40%)	20

20 London Plan Policies 3.11 and 3.12 require the maximum reasonable amount of affordable housing to be delivered in all residential developments above ten units. Policy 3.11 sets a strategic target of 60% of the affordable housing offer to be for social or affordable rent and 40% for intermediate or rent or sale. Further guidance is provided in the Mayor's draft Affordable Housing and Viability SPG, which sets out a threshold approach based on a 35% minimum target. Within this strategic context, the provision of 100% affordable housing is strongly supported. The proposed mix of units is appropriate given the site's central location and noting the retained building.

21 In terms of affordability, the social rents will be set at the London Affordable Rent benchmarks, whilst the intermediate housing will be provided for household income levels of £35,000-£45,000, depending on unit size. The intermediate (London Living Rent) levels are set out in table 3.

Table 3: Intermediate Housing (Based on London Living Rent weekly levels for Holborn and Covent Garden ward)

Unit type	Total highest monthly charge	Average weekly costs	Provision compared to London GLA Living Rent benchmarks per week
One bed	£900	£215-£225	£259
Two bed	£1,083	£240-250	£288

Mixed-use and viability

22 The Council's LDF Policy DP1 requires mixed use development to include a contribution towards the supply of housing, with 50% of the total uplift in floor area to be provided for residential, with 50% of that provision to be affordable. The proposed uplift in gross external floor area is 8,520sq.m. The applicant is providing 2,147 sq.m. of residential floorspace, all of which is affordable. This results in a shortfall against the Council's policy of 2,133 sq.m. of residential floorspace.

23 The applicant has set out that it is unable to provide any additional residential on-site; that it has been unable to bring forward alternative sites; and that scheme viability prevents any further provision. In light of the shortfall in housing provision against local policy requirements, the applicant has submitted a viability report, which is currently being independently assessed. GLA officers have carried out an initial review against the guidance set out within the Mayor's draft Affordable Housing and Viability SPG and will engage with the Council and applicant to ensure that the maximum reasonable amount of housing, and affordable housing, is secured.

24 As set out in paragraph 18, the applicant should also explore opportunities to include provision of affordable workspace within the development. Following the robust interrogation of the viability assessment, GLA officers will work with the Council and the applicant regarding the provision of affordable workspace in the context of overall scheme viability, and the appropriate provision of housing.

Residential density

25 The density, at 1,157 habitable rooms per hectare, responds appropriately to London Plan Policy 3.4, and, as set out in paragraphs 18, 30 and 31 the development is of a high quality design, meets London Plan requirements with regards residential quality, and provides appropriate public realm improvements. As such, the proposal is acceptable with regards density.

Children's play space

26 In accordance with London Plan Policy 3.6, the application includes a communal courtyard at first floor level, providing 65 sq.m. of amenity space, with a further 124 sq.m. of amenity space provided on the rooftop terrace, accessed via the communal core. The applicant is also providing ground floor public realm improvements, which is supported. The Council should secure the detailed design and provision of the amenity space via appropriate conditions and in the s106.

Urban design

Layout

27 The proposals are well considered, and the layout has been informed by a strong public realm strategy that links successfully with existing and emerging pedestrian routes towards Tottenham Court Road Crossrail Station and Princes Circus; and New Oxford Street and St Giles Churchyard. The proposal also provides additional public space and improved connectivity between New Oxford Street and the St Giles development immediately to the south of the site.

28 The intention to create a shared space approach along the length of Bucknall Street is supported and will create potential for a public interface between the proposals and the St Giles development. The two defined areas of public realm at the eastern end of Bucknall Street and between Castlewood and Medius House are appropriately sized and give potential to form hubs of activity which will help to optimise animation in currently under-utilised areas, which is strongly supported. Proposed routes and areas of public realm are located and orientated to align successfully with key desire lines in the wider area; particularly from Tottenham Court Road station and Oxford Street.

29 The introduction of a new enclosed arcade link (to be secured after hours) running between Castlewood House and Medius House is supported and its proportions and height will create an accessible and welcoming extension of public realm from New Oxford Street.

Form, massing and architecture

30 The form and massing strategy is supported and is largely consistent with the established and varied scale of the surrounding townscape. The intention to retain Medias House is strongly supported and the proposed Castlewood House replacement building respects its scale by acknowledging the existing shoulder height. While Castlewood House itself sits outside of the neighbouring conservation areas, it is noted that the proposals provide an opportunity to improve on the architecture, articulation and materials of the existing building and create an enhanced visual connection between the Bloomsbury and Denmark Street conservation areas. The submitted TVIA indicates a strong and contextual architectural response that draws on the rhythm and proportions of neighbouring heritage assets and thereby enhances the character of the immediate streetscape, which is welcomed. The proposed roof extension to Medius House is sympathetic to the character and scale of the building and gives potential to create a good quality of residential accommodation.

31 Based on the sympathetic and contextual design response and having considered the submitted TVIA, the potential impacts on the context of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the NPPF and London Plan Policy 7.8, officers are satisfied that there would be no harmful impacts on any of the neighbouring conservation areas or heritage assets.

Residential quality

32 The overall approach to residential quality is supported. Whilst there are a number of north facing single aspect units, this is acceptable in this central urban location and within a retained building; however, the applicant should ensure floor to ceiling heights are maximised to optimise daylight/sunlight penetration. It is also noted that the Council has raised some concerns relating to overlooking to neighbouring flats, and where possible the applicant should mitigate this through the design.

Inclusive design

33 London Plan Policy 7.2 seeks to ensure that new development achieves the highest standards of accessible and inclusive design. In accordance with London Plan Policy 3.8, the applicant is providing 10% wheelchair accessible units within Medius House, one social affordable unit and one intermediate unit; however, full compliance with Lifetime Homes is not possible due to the constraints of the retained building. This is acceptable.

Climate change

34 The applicant has broadly followed the energy hierarchy set out in London Plan Policy 5.6 and sufficient information has been provided to understand the proposal as a whole. The applicant has investigated the feasibility of combined heat and power (CHP); however, this has been discounted due to the intermittent nature of the heat load. This is accepted, however, further information and work relating to energy efficiency, overheating, renewable energy and overall carbon reduction measures is required to assess whether the strategy complies with London Plan policy and to verify the carbon dioxide savings. The carbon dioxide savings fall short of the target within Policy 5.2 of the London Plan (overall saving of 4% for the domestic buildings and 24% for the non-domestic build). The applicant should consider the scope for additional measures aimed at achieving further carbon reductions before the consideration of contributing to an offsetting fund. Full details of the information required has been sent to both the applicant and Camden Council.

Drainage

35 The application site, and its surrounds, have significant areas of surface water flood risk. The applicant should therefore further explore measures to reduce discharge rates, and address fully the opportunities for sustainable urban drainage infrastructure in accordance with London Plan policy. The Council should secure all drainage measures via condition.

Transport for London

Walking, cycling and access

36 In accordance with London Plan cycle parking standards, a further 76 short stay spaces should be incorporated. All cycle parking design should comply with London Cycle Design Standards (LCDS).

37 The applicant proposes to relocate the existing cycle hire docking station on Earnshaw Street to Bucknall Street, which raises no strategic concern. Given this station is one of the busiest in central London, a section 106 (s106) contribution is required to cover the cost of relocation, and to increase its capacity by 14 docking points either adjacent and/or by increasing provision at another nearby site. The Council, who are the highway authority, object to the relocation to Bucknall Street, and as such officers will continue to engage with the Council and the applicant to agree a suitable site and design for the expanded facility and the appropriate amount of the s106

contribution to cover the full cost of the relocation and expansion; this sum is likely to be in the order of £100,000-£200,000.

38 Permeability will be improved with a new route through the site; this should be open 24/7 to cyclists and pedestrians. In addition, a s106 contribution of £10,000 should be secured towards refreshing local Legible London signage to reflect the new development. Proposed improvements to the existing footways and public realm should also be secured.

Car parking

39 The development is car free which is welcomed. Residents and employees should be excluded from applying for a parking permit via the s106 agreement.

Public transport network

40 To support sustainable transport and to mitigate the impacts of this car free development, a s106 contribution of £12,000 should be secured to upgrade the bus shelter at one of the stops (Z) serving the site.

Travel planning

41 The robust, site specific objectives set out in the applicant's framework travel plan submitted as part of the application are welcomed. The final travel plan should be secured and monitored by the s106 agreement. In line with London Plan policy, a deliveries and servicing plan and construction logistics and management plan should be secured via condition. The deliveries and servicing plan should address the potential conflict between cyclists and delivery vehicles.

Section 106 and Community Infrastructure Levy

42 In accordance with London Plan Policy 8.3, the Mayor commenced CIL charging for developments on 1st April 2012. Within the borough, the charge is £50 per square metre. The site is also in the central London area where section 106 contributions for Crossrail will be sought, in accordance with London Plan Policy 6.5 and the associated SPG 'Use of planning obligations in the funding of Crossrail' (April 2013). In these situations, the Mayoral CIL will be treated as a credit towards the section 106 Crossrail liability, and this should be reflected in the wording of the section 106 agreement.

Local planning authority's position

43 The Council is undertaking an independent review of the applicant's viability, with officers expected to report the application to committee on 11 May 2017.

Legal considerations

44 Under the arrangements set out in Article 4 of the Town and Country Planning (Mayor of London) Order 2008 the Mayor is required to provide the local planning authority with a statement setting out whether he considers that the application complies with the London Plan, and his reasons for taking that view. Unless notified otherwise by the Mayor, the Council must consult the Mayor again under Article 5 of the Order if it subsequently resolves to make a draft decision on the application, in order that the Mayor may decide whether to allow the draft decision to proceed unchanged, or direct the Council under Article 6 of the Order to refuse the application, or issue a direction under Article 7 of the Order that he is to act as the local planning authority for the purpose of determining the application and any connected application. There is no obligation at this present stage for the Mayor to indicate his intentions regarding a possible direction, and no such decision should be inferred from the Mayor's statement and comments.

Financial considerations

45 There are no financial considerations at this stage.

Conclusion

46 London Plan policies on CAZ, housing, urban design, climate change, sustainable drainage and transport are relevant to this application. The principle of the application is strongly supported, and broadly complies with the London Plan; however outstanding matters set out below need to be addressed:

- **Principle of development:** The provision of commercial floorspace and residential accommodation is supported. Opportunities to secure affordable workspace should be fully explored.
- **Housing:** The provision of 100% affordable housing is strongly supported. GLA officers will review the viability assessment to ensure that the maximum reasonable amount of housing is delivered.
- **Climate change:** further information is required regarding CHP performance, photovoltaics and the proposed energy centre. Additional drainage/green infrastructure mitigation measures are also required, and should be secured by condition.
- **Transport:** Various s106 obligations and transport plans are required, including a contribution towards cycle hire expansion, Legible London, and bus infrastructure.

for further information, contact GLA Planning Unit (Development & Projects Team):

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