

Delegated Report		Analysis sheet		Expiry Date:	30/05/2017
		N/A / attached		Consultation Expiry Date:	18/05/2017
Officer			Application Number(s)		
Oluwaseyi Enirayetan			2017/1873/P		
Application Address			Drawing Numbers		
36 - 37 Great Russell Street LONDON WC1B 3PP			Refer to decision notice		
PO 3/4	Area Team Signature	C&UD	Authorised Officer Signature		
Proposal(s)					
Erection of four canopies to front elevation at ground floor level.					
Recommendation(s):		Refuse Planning Permission			
Application Type:		Full Planning Permission			

Conditions or Reasons for Refusal:	Refer to Decision Notice					
Informatives:						
Consultations						
Adjoining Occupiers:	No. notified	0	No. of responses	0	No. of objections	0
			No. electronic	0		
Summary of consultation responses:	<p>A site notice was displayed from 26/04/2017 to 17/05/2017</p> <p>Press notice published on 27/04/2017</p> <p>No objections were received following the statutory consultation</p>					
CAAC/Local groups* comments:	<p>The Bloomsbury CAAC objected to the application on the following grounds:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 We object to the proposed canopy - it would detract from the elegant facade from important viewpoints and from the amenity of the area and set an undesirable precedent for more <p>The Bloomsbury Association objected to the application on the following grounds:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 The proposed canopy/signage by reason of its size, design and location would be detrimental the character and appearance of the host building, the terrace of which it is a part and the Bloomsbury Conservation Area 2 The building is currently vacant although its last use appears to have been as B1 business use with residential on the third floor. Previous decisions appear to have acknowledged A1 retail use of ground and basement floors although there is no evidence of this on external inspection of the buildings. Nevertheless, if A1 retail use has been established, this is a north-facing facade that would not require solar shading so, as change of use to A3 is not proposed that might incorporate an external terrace, its purpose is questioned. 3 No alterations are proposed to the exterior of the buildings, which includes an existing raised area across the full width of both buildings, historic railings to number 37 and a cast iron grating to the basement of 36. These existing features are all omitted from the front elevation, existing and proposed (drawing 00-111 rev P01), but with them retained, the area beneath the canopy/signage would be inaccessible or unusable 4 We also note that no material, colour or lighting is specified for the canopy/signage and the elevation drawing incorrectly identifies the numbers of both buildings. This is unsound information on which to approve the application. If decided by the Council on this basis, the decision may be at risk of being overturned on judicial review 5 We are concerned by the low height of the canopy/signage, which would be a danger to people passing beneath as they enter number 37 					

- 6 The buildings are considered a positive contributor to the Bloomsbury Conservation Area. This addition does not preserve or enhance the conservation area; it detracts. The Design & Access Statement draws attention to existing canopies to nearby buildings, including a garish structure on the adjacent building, 38 Great Russell Street. These new additions may or may not have been granted planning permission but their presence does not set a precedent to be emulated. The intrinsic character of the historic buildings themselves sets that
- 7 This is just garish advertisement inappropriate in the conservation area and the revision, while smaller is no improvement.

The South Bloomsbury Tenants & Residents Association objected to the application on the following grounds:

- 1 Damage to nature of the Conservation Area - The proposed canopy will detract from the rhythm of the building bringing emphasis to the ground floor. The nature of these properties was to have a diminutive ground floor and a principal 1st floor.
- 2 The surrounding canopies show exactly why this conservation area should not be subject to further canopies as they soon become dirty and poorly kept
- 3 Drawn information – Inaccuracies with submitted documents
 - Elevations omit a step around ownership step
 - Elevations omit existing railings
 - Inefficient information of the surface mounted shop signage
 - Pitch and fixing of the canopies is not clear as no sectional information is given
 - Existing elevation given definition by inclusion of shadows. This has been omitted from the proposed as it will highlight the negative impact on the internal space that the fabric canopies will have on a north facing elevation.

Site Description

The site is located on the southern side of Great Russell Street, near the entrance of the Grade 1 British Museum. The building is currently split across the two addresses at 36 and 37 Great Russell Street and comprises a four-storey building plus basement. The subject premise is located on the ground floor. The building is within the Bloomsbury Conservation and considered a positive contributor to the Bloomsbury Conservation Area.

Relevant History

2007/4633/A - Display of internally illuminated lettering and an internally illuminated projecting box sign at ground floor level – **Granted 15/11/2007**

2007/5810/P - Installation of a new front entrance door to retail shop (A1 use) – **Refused 01/02/2008**

2008/0280/A - Continued display of internally illuminated lettering between windows on the frontage at ground floor level – **Granted 17/04/2008**

2011/2881/A - Installation of awning to shop (Class A1). – **Refused 12/08/2011**

2016/2795/P - Infill extension at basement and ground floor level to the rear (Use Class A1).- **Granted 23/08/2016**

Relevant policies

National Planning Policy Framework 2012

London Plan 2016

LDF Core Strategy and Development Policies

Core Strategy

CS5 (Managing the impact of growth and development)

CS14 (Promoting high quality places and conserving our heritage)

Development Policies

DP24 (Securing high quality design)

DP25 (Conserving Camden's heritage)

DP26 (Managing the impact of development on occupiers and neighbours)

DP30 (Shopfronts)

Supplementary Planning Guidance

CPG1 (Design) 2015

CPG6 (Amenity) 2013

Bloomsbury Conservation Area Statement adopted April 2001

Draft Camden Local Plan 2016

The Inspector's report on the Local Plan was published on 15 May 2017 and concludes that the plan is 'sound' subject to modifications being made to the Plan. While the determination of planning applications should continue to be made in accordance with the existing development plan until formal adoption, substantial weight may now be attached to the relevant policies of the emerging plan as a material consideration following publication of the Inspector's report, subject to any relevant recommended modifications in the Inspector's report.

The following policies are considered to be relevant:

A1 Managing the impact of development

D1 Design

D2 Heritage

D3 Shopfronts

Assessment

1. Proposal

1.1 The development proposal comprises the installation of four non-retractable fabric canopies. It would be located to the window openings below the fascia between stone columns on the front elevation.

1.2 The canopies would measure 0.9m wide on each window opening.

2 Revisions

2.1 The initial proposal was for the erection of a full width canopy and has been revised to be erected over the individual windows to mitigate design concerns. However, these are still considered unacceptable as will be detailed in the officer's report below.

3 Consideration

3.1 The main issue in this application is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the building and the Bloomsbury conservation area.

3.2 DP24 states that the Council will require all developments to be of the highest standard of design and to consider the character and proportions of the existing building. DP25 states that the Council will only permit development in conservation areas that preserves and enhances the character and appearance of the conservation area. Camden Planning Guidance (CPG) states that awnings should not obscure the fascia and other important parts of the shopfront and buildings.

3.3 Policy D1 Design of the emerging Local Plan states the Council will seek to secure high quality design in development and would require that development respects local context and character; preserves or enhances the historic environment and heritage assets in accordance with Policy D2 Heritage and contributes positively to the street frontage. Further stating that the Council places great importance on preserving the historic environment and will not permit development that results in harm that is less than substantial to the significance of a designated heritage asset.

3.4 The Conservation Area statement, for this particular site, notes that nos.35-38 have a dominant classical influence in terms of their design and detailing with strong horizontal and vertical banding. This horizontal banding is strengthened by the horizontal lines between the building blocks at ground, first and second floor level as well as the cornice between ground and first floor level. Other key elements on the ground floor are the keystones above the two arched windows and entrance doors. The consistency in height, mass, materials and detailed elevational treatment gives a very distinctive and consistent mid-19th century character to this part of Great Russell Street.

3.5 The proposed canopies would be non-retractable which does not accord with CPG Design which states that canopies are only acceptable where they are retractable. It must be noted that there are two window arch features on two of the existing windows which are not shown on the drawings. The ground floor, although a retail unit has a corporate outfit and does not benefit from a traditional shop frontage. It is considered that the building is entirely unsuited to the installation of any type of canopy or awning. It is considered that the proposed canopies due to its design and

positioning would result in harm to the character and appearance of the host building, streetscene and conservation area.

3.6 Whilst there are nearby examples of other awnings/canopies in the vicinity, awnings are not a dominant feature along this section of Great Russell Street. Nearby examples such as that directly across from the site are located on traditional shop fronts and incorporate designs and proportions compliant with Camden Planning Guidance. The neighbouring property at No.38 Great Russell Street benefits from Dutch blind awnings however these were granted under superseded policy (in 1979) and therefore do not serve as precedent. It is considered that the existing awning at No. 38 detracts significantly from the character and appearance of the host building and streetscene and would not comply with current guidance and policy. It is considered that in this context, that the introduction of a canopy at the subject site would create additional visual clutter to the detriment of the character and appearance of the streetscene and Bloomsbury conservation area.

4 Conclusion

4.1 The proposed canopies by reason of its location and design would constitute an incongruous addition resulting in visual clutter and would harm the appearance of the frontage detrimental to the character and appearance of the host building, the surrounding terrace and the Bloomsbury Conservation Area, contrary to Core Strategy Policy CS14 (Promoting high quality places and conserving our heritage) and Development policies DP24 (Securing high quality design); DP25 (Conserving Camden's heritage) and DP30 (Shopfronts) and Policies D1 (Design), D2 (Heritage) and D3 (Shopfronts) of the Draft Camden Local Plan 2016.

5 Recommendation: Refuse planning permission