

CONSULTATION SUMMARY

Case reference number(s)

2017/2931/P

Case Officer:

Jonathan McClue

Application Address:

195-199 Gray's Inn Road

London

WC1X 8UL

Proposal(s)

Substantial demolition of existing single storey structure (in retail (A1) use) and construction of a two storey office building (B1a) with 178sqm of floorspace. Excavation of lower ground floor level to 850mm below street level

Representations

Consultations:	No. notified	0	No. of responses	2	No. of objections	2
					No. of comments	0
					No. of support	0

Summary of representations

(Officer response(s) in italics)

The owner/occupiers of No. 4 Mecklenburgh Street objected to the application on 19/06/2017, 20/06/2017, 14/07/2017 and 19/07/2017 on the following grounds:

- 1) Harm to conservation area and the historical context of the Mecklenburgh Street terrace
- 2) The size of the development, which would virtually double the existing building
- 3) The proposed asymmetrically pitched-roof would look very odd and not in keeping with the conservation area, where the vast majority of

roofs appear flat from street level

- 4) The proposed digging to create more internal space would impact negatively on the existing aesthetic quality of the conservation area
- 5) Harm to quality of life for residents of Mecklenburgh Street
- 6) Loss of daylight and sunlight due to insufficient analysis
- 7) Noise and light pollution from pitched-roof windows
- 8) Inaccurate drawings due to cellar not being included at 4 Mecklenburgh Street. The developer does not the own part of the site showing excavation. Therefore, the works would be trespassing
- 9) Proposals do not show sufficient detail for windows within rear extension
- 10) Lack of market assessment for increasing size of commercial space

Officer Response:

- 1) *The proposed development maintains the historic plot width and provides three repeating bays, in reference to the three Victorian shops, which historically occupied the site. It results in a mews-like development in the context of the listed houses, while being honest in terms of its design. The smaller, punched upper windows, the wide lower aperture and the bressumer-like horizontal members all contribute to this, while additional detail (subdivided panels) adds interest to the ground-floor windows. The materials complement the surroundings, especially the use of brickwork. Overall, the proposal is considered to enhance the character and appearance of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area*
- 2) *The proposal has been sensitively designed to be appropriate in its context: the rear wall would remain with the roof sloping upwards towards the street, the top of the roof is setback from the front façade, the building would be lowered 850mm below pavement level and the façade would have a subsidiary upper floor. The proposal is therefore not considered to be of an inappropriate size.*
- 3) *The roof would appear flat from within the majority of the streetscene, as the pitched element is setback and concealed behind the parapets on the side elevations. Notwithstanding this, the proposed roof is not objectionable by way of its design*

or form.

- 4) The lower ground floor level would not be perceptible within the streetscene, as the façade extends up from the pavement. The development reads as a mews type structure. Furthermore, the lowering of the lower ground floor allows the building to be lower in height, helping to retain the existing character and scale of the current building and not leading to a structure that would dominate the listed terrace behind it.*
- 5) See 6 and 7 below*
- 6) The existing rear boundary wall would be retained, as annotated in drawing no. AP.07.03 Rev A, to ensure that no additional obstruction of light would result to the lower ground floor windows of Mecklenburgh Street. The submitted Daylight and Sunlight Memo assessed the impact on the ground level windows of Mecklenburgh Street using the BRE 25° obstruction angle criterion with the existing and proposed roofline. It confirmed that the windows are compliant with the first stage of the BRE tests and that no further tests are required.*
- 7) The strip roof lights at first floor level are bottom hung windows with restricted opening for the purpose of background ventilation only. The small opening would limit sound transfer with the position of the glazed unit reflecting sound back into the room.*

The use and pattern of the office accommodation would be complementary to the use pattern of the surrounding residential properties with peak occupancy during daytime hours and minimum or no occupancy to be expected on evenings or weekends. In any event, the working environment is not expected to generate excessive levels of noise. Planning conditions are attached to ensure the rooflights are shut outside of office hours and that a film is attached to the rooflights to prevent light spillage.

- 8) Property ownership matters are not material planning considerations. The applicant has submitted amended plans to demonstrate that the existing cellar would not be disturbed. Any works to the cellar would require listed building consent.*
- 9) The submitted drawings (drawing no. AP.06.04 Rev D) shows that all the applicable windows would be blocked up. The applicant has suggested that their ability to do this is subject to*

agreement from neighbours as they would need to be able to gain access to the relevant walls through their rear gardens. If the windows were to be left in situ, Officers consider that the applicant may have to formally amend the drawings through a subsequent planning application.

10) The loss of the retail use has been considered acceptable as part of the refused applications under 2014/5154/P and 2015/2228/P. The creation and extension of the office space within the Central London Area is supported by Camden policies E1 and E2, which support businesses of all sizes and encourages the provision of employment premises and sites in the borough. Marketing evidence to justify new or enlarged offices is not a requirement of the Local Plan.

The owner/occupier of No. 5A Mecklenburgh Street objected to the application on 05/06/2017 on the following grounds:

- 1) From the drawings, it is very difficult to identify what will happen to the existing windows in the back addition
- 2) Concerned regarding the Daylight and Sunlight Memo, which considers that neighbouring properties are unlikely to be significantly affected
- 3) Concerned regarding the drainage of rain water from the main roof and back addition roof
- 4) Concerned regarding noise from the opened rear strip roof lights and the roof light in the back addition as there are no defined hours of the office space being open

Officer Response:

1) The submitted drawings (drawing no. AP.06.04 Rev D) shows that all the applicable windows would be blocked up. The applicant has suggested that their ability to do this is subject to agreement from neighbours as they would need to be able to gain access to the relevant walls through their rear gardens. If the windows were to be left in situ, Officers consider that the applicant may have to formally amend the drawings through a subsequent planning application.

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| | <p>2) <i>The existing rear boundary wall would be retained, as annotated in drawing no. AP.07.03 Rev A, to ensure that no additional obstruction of light would result to the lower ground floor windows of Mecklenburgh Street. The submitted Daylight and Sunlight Memo assessed the impact on the ground level windows of Mecklenburgh Street using the BRE 25° obstruction angle criterion with the existing and proposed roofline. It confirmed that the windows are compliant with the first stage of the BRE tests and that no further tests are required. The proposal is not materially larger than the applications refused under 2014/5154/P and 2015/2228/P, which were considered to be acceptable on amenity grounds by the Council.</i></p> <p>3) <i>These matters are not material planning considerations and would be considered under the Building Regulations procedure. Notwithstanding this, the applicant has confirmed that drainage of the roof to the projecting structure adjacent to no. 5 would remain as existing. Surface drainage of the principal roof would be via internal downpipes with the existing downpipe into no. 4 Mecklenburgh Street retained as an overflow only.</i></p> <p>4) <i>The use and pattern of the office accommodation would be complementary to the use pattern of the surrounding residential properties with peak occupancy during daytime hours and minimum or no occupancy to be expected on evenings or weekends. In any event, the working environment is not expected to generate excessive levels of noise. Planning conditions are attached to ensure the rooflights are shut outside of office hours and that a film is attached to the rooflights to prevent light spillage.</i></p> |
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Recommendation:-

Grant conditional planning permission subject to S106 agreement