

Delegated Report		Analysis sheet	Expiry Date:	26/01/2017
(Members Briefing)		N/A	Consultation Expiry Date:	19/01/2017
Officer			Application Number(s)	
Jennifer Walsh			2016/6472/P	
Application Address			Drawing Numbers	
Basement Car Park 20 Lamb's Conduit Street London WC1N 3LE			Please refer to draft decision notice	
PO 3/4	Area Team Signature	C&UD	Authorised Officer Signature	
Proposal(s)				
Change of use of the existing basement car park (ancillary residential Class C3) to a flexible B1/B8/D1/Gym (D2)/veterinary clinic (sui generis) use, including the installation of air conditioning plant to the existing basement lightwell.				
Recommendations:		Grant Planning Permission		
Application Type:		Full Planning Permission		

Conditions or Reasons for Refusal:	Refer to Draft Decision Notice					
Informatives:						
Consultations						
Adjoining Occupiers:	No. notified	00	No. of responses	09	No. of objections	03
			No. Electronic	00		
Summary of consultation responses:	<p>A site notice was displayed from 07/12/2016 – 28/12/2016, however additional information was received in regards to the air conditioning unit proposed and therefore the site notice was re published from 29/12/2016 – 19/01/2016.</p> <p>1 letter of support has been received from 40 Theobalds Road stating that due to the difficulties of accessing the basement the proposal is good for the area.</p> <p>3 Objections have been received which are summarised as followed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The lease does not allow the tenant to use the space for anything other than its intended and original use [as a car park]. <i>Officers Response – This cannot be taken as a material planning consideration</i> - The access and ingress to the building is wholly unsuitable for any use other than car parking or storage ancillary to the flats above as the ramp is only designed for the access of vehicles and the side pedestrian door acts only as an emergency escape route. <i>Officers Response – Pedestrians can use the existing ramp as access to the basement as well as retaining the emergency access for the basement occupiers.</i> - The premises are incapable of providing a commercial work environment given the lack of natural daylight and the inability to improve this significantly. <i>Officers Response – Please refer to section 4.0</i> - Concerned with the increase in pedestrian traffic noise to the residential flats above if a change of use were to be permitted. <i>Officers Response – Please refer to section 4.0</i> - The removal of 8 car parking spaces will create additional congestion for on-street parking. <i>Officers Response – It is considered that as no cars have been parking in the car park, there will not be additional congestion on the on street parking provision. The applicants have confirmed that there are available spaces at the ground floor level car park.</i> - The security of the flats could be compromised given access via the lift. <i>Officers Response – The access to the basement is proposed via the existing ramp and the stairwell off Richbell Place. The existing lift is not within the demise of this application.</i> - The original planning application for the conversion of the building to flats was conditional on ancillary parking being available to the leaseholders; <i>Officers Response – This is a civil matter and is not a material planning consideration in this instance.</i> - The applicant has no legal basis to make the changes under the terms of the lease. <i>Officers Response – This is a civil matter and is not a material planning consideration in this instance.</i> - The lightwell has direct access to the residential flats above, the noise emanating from the units will create a nuisance; <i>Officers Response – Please refer to paragraph 4.6</i> - The noise report is based on measurements taken at ground level and they were based on measurements taken at ground level and they take no account of amplification at upper levels of the building. <i>Officers Response – Please refer to paragraph 4.6</i> 					
CAAC/Local groups comments:	<p>Rugby and Harpur Residents Association object to the proposal on the following grounds:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The site is entirely unsuitable for any other use other than parking. The ceiling heights look as if they would be inadequate once flooring has been installed and the lack of natural light would make working conditions unacceptable. <i>Officers Response – Please refer to section 4.0</i> - Noise would cause considerable nuisance to residents in the flats above. 					

Officers Response – Please refer to section 4.0

- The ground floor car park detracts a great deal from the appeal of Lamb's Conduit Street. The parking facilities for the residents should be relocated to the basement, and that the ground floor should revert to retail or residential use.

Officers Response – Officers can only assess the proposals which have been submitted.

Site Description

20-26 Lambs Conduit Street is a 4 storey building which was originally built as offices (Class B1) and converted into residential (class C3) in 1996. The building is located just outside of the Bloomsbury conservation area, but is located next to a listed building to the north. The site is also located within the Central London Area.

The basement area is currently a redundant space as no vehicles can access the space due to the site constraints.

Relevant History

P9601185R1: Conversion of existing office block to 15 residential units with ancillary car parking, **Approved 20/08/1996**

PS9704322: Elevational amendments to planning permission dated 20th September 1996, (Reg No: P9601185R1), for the conversion of the existing office block to 15 residential units with ancillary car parking **Approved 20/06/1997**

Relevant policies

LDF Core Strategy and Development Policies

- DP1 – Mixed use development
- DP13 – Employment premises and sites
- DP15 – Community and leisure uses
- DP16 – The transport implications of development
- DP17 – Walking, cycling and public transport
- DP22 – Promoting sustainable design and construction
- DP24 – Securing high quality design
- DP26 – Managing the impact of development on occupiers and neighbours
- DP27 – Basement and Lightwells
- CS5 – Managing the impact of growth
- CS8 – Promoting a successful and inclusive Camden economy
- CS9 – Achieving a successful Central London
- CS10 – Supporting community facilities and services
- CS11 – Promoting sustainable and efficient travel
- CS13 – Tackling climate change through promoting higher environmental standards
- CS14 – Promoting high quality places and conserving our heritage
- CS17 – Making Camden a safer place
- CS18 – Dealing with our waste and encouraging recycling
- CS19 – Delivering and monitoring the core strategy

National Planning Policy Framework 2012

The London Plan 2016

Camden Planning Guidance

Assessment

1.0 The Site

1.1 20-26 Lambs Conduit Street is a 4 storey corner building which was originally built as offices (Class B1) and converted into residential (class C3) in 1996. The building is located just outside of the Bloomsbury conservation area, but is located next to a listed building to the north. The site is also located within the Central London Area.

1.2 The basement area is currently a redundant space as no cars can access the space due to the site constraints. There is a ramped access at the corner of Richbell Place and Emerald Street. However, the access ramp is narrow and no cars of modern dimensions can enter the existing facility due to the tight left hand turn into the car park. Whilst the car park has been used for scooter and motor cycle repairs the space has been predominantly vacant for the last couple of years.

2.0 Land Use policy and loss of existing use

2.1 Policy DP1 of Camden's Local Development Framework states that *"The Council will seek a mix of uses in development where appropriate in all parts of the borough, including a contribution towards the supply of housing."* It is clear that the general requirement of DP1 is for a mix of uses, including housing, in all parts of the borough where it is appropriate to do so.

2.2 The single level basement car park covers an area of approximately 272 sqm (GIA) however, being at the basement level with a small single lightwell, it is not considered that residential would be suitable within the existing basement area. As there is no additional floorspace being provided within the application, a residential element would not be a policy requirement in this instance.

2.3 The existing car park is accessed via a single track ramp off Richbell Place and a secondary access is also provided off Richbell Place via a communal stairwell. The applicant has submitted tracked drawings which show that no cars can access the basement car parking area due to site constraints and the turning circle off the ramp. This is a very unique situation as the car park was approved as part of the planning history for the site under reference P9601185R1 which approved the original change of use application from Offices to residential. This application submission proposes a change of use from ancillary residential use in the form of a car park to a variety of uses including D1/D2/B1/B8 or Sui generis. The Council's Transport Officer has assessed these tracking drawings and accepts that due to the site constraints, no cars or vans can access the basement. Therefore the loss of the car park is acceptable in land use terms in this instance.

2.4 Due to the basement car park being a redundant space there is an opportunity to explore further uses within this highly accessible central London location. By virtue of the size and nature of the site, in relation to B1 uses, it is likely that this space will be more affordable for small businesses than much of the office provision in the surrounding area and the Council do not anticipate the unit will struggle to find a tenant, due to the market close by in the Borough. Due to the nature of the site, this site could also utilise the space as workshop facilities as the Council is also aware of the pressure on jewellery workshop space in nearby Hatton Garden. Whilst always sought, natural light to Office space is not a requirement. Therefore, additional office space in this area, which would offer a flexible use suitable for a range of business purposes, would be welcomed.

2.5 B8 (Storage and distribution) is also proposed as a use for the site. The site would lend itself to be a storage unit; however it would have to be light storage due to the site restrictions which limit the site to be fully accessible as a car park. It is not considered that the use of this space as a storage use would harm the character and appearance of the building nor the wider area. Cars and Vans can reverse down the existing ramp and then goods can be moved into the space using a trolley. As this is no different to the existing situation, such a proposal is considered acceptable.

2.6 Camden's Core Strategy policy CS10 –Supporting community facilities and services, sets out our overarching approach to protecting and providing the community facilities that meet the needs of Camden's growing population. Policy DP15 helps to deliver the Core Strategy by providing our detailed approach. New community and/or leisure uses should not harm residential amenity, the environment or transport networks in line with all the policies. The proposal seeks approval for a D1/D2 use within the application. Class D1 includes all Non-residential institutions, included Clinics, health centres, crèches, day nurseries, day centres, schools, art galleries (other than for sale or hire), museums, libraries, halls, places of worship, church halls, law court. Non-residential education and training centres. Due to the site being in a highly accessible location, as well as benefitting from direct access to the basement level via the access ramp off Richbell Place, it is considered appropriate for these uses to be acceptable. DP15 states that "new community and/or leisure uses..... Must be consistent with their surroundings in terms of scale, character and mix of uses". The size of the basement level is not overly large in footprint and is well located and therefore is considered appropriate for a D1 use to be acceptable.

2.7 Class D2 use is also sought in this location however, the applicants have identified that a gym would be the particular use sought from within this class. Due to the basement not benefiting from natural light, and offering a flexible floorspace, it is considered that a gym could be accommodated within the building. However, officers have concerns as to other uses within the D2 use class due to the residential accommodation above, and the noise and disturbance which could be generated from other uses and therefore it is recommended that a condition is added to restrict the uses to only a Gym under class D2.

2.8 The application also seeks permission for the use of the space as a veterinary clinic (sui generis). Such a use does not require a large amount of floor space nor access to natural light. As stated in the applicant's covering letter, typical opening hours for veterinary clinics are similar to office buildings and visitor trips are generally low. Therefore, it is considered an appropriate use of the space.

3.0 Design and Conservation

3.1. No external alterations are proposed in relation to the change of use application. However, an air conditioning unit is proposed to be installed within the existing lightwell at basement level. Full details of the air conditioning unit is recommended to be secured via condition, but the principle of the unit at basement level, within the lightwell is not considered to have a detrimental impact on the host property nor the wider area. Therefore, the installation of the proposed plant in this instance is considered acceptable.

4.0 Amenity of neighbours

4.1 Policy CS5 seeks to protect the amenity of Camden's residents by ensuring the impact of development is fully considered. Furthermore, Policy DP26 seeks to ensure that development protects the quality of life of occupiers and neighbours by only granting permission to development that would not harm the amenity of neighbouring residents. In relation to this application, there are no additions or alterations proposed, and therefore it is the impact of the proposed land use which must be assessed.

4.2 The application seeks approval for a variety of different uses and therefore each proposed use needs to be fully considered to ensure that the proposal protects the quality of life of the neighbouring occupiers, primarily those who live directly above the development as well as those in neighbouring properties.

4.3 The use of the existing car park currently has no restrictions of opening hours and therefore could receive cars if the entrance were to be amended, including deliveries and other servicing over 24hrs a day / 7 days a week. It is recommended that the new uses proposed are conditioned to reduce these hours to be open for customers between 7.00 - 22.30 Mondays to Saturdays and 8.00 - 20.00 on Sundays and Bank Holidays. Given the location of the site in Central London and due to the size of the proposed basement meaning that it would not generate significant traffic flow, the condition is sought to be acceptable and reasonable in this instance.

4.3 B1 (Offices) is a use proposed for this site. Due to the size of the site, it is considered that a B1 use within this basement level would result in a significant number of trips nor occupiers and the noise generated would not be sufficient to warrant a refusal in this instance. B8 (Storage and distribution) is also proposed. Due to the site constraints any storage or distribution would not be overly large for this central London location. A condition is recommended to be added to any permission which states the hours which deliveries can be made to protect the amenity of the neighbouring residents.

4.4 The proposal seeks approval for a D1/D2 use within the application. Again, due to the size of the site, being at basement level and having separate access via Richbell Place direct to the basement unit, it is not considered that the proposal would harm the amenity of the neighbours in terms of noise and disturbance. D1 does cover a wide variety of uses, yet due to the size of the basement it is not considered that a significant number of people visiting the site at any one time would be generated. A use of the basement as a Gym (Class D2) could harm neighbouring amenity if music was played loudly during the day time. A condition is therefore recommended to be added to ensure that music is not audible from outside the premises.

4.5 A veterinary clinic (sui generis) is also proposed. Due to the nature of work and the use proposed, it is not considered that a veterinary clinic would harm the amenity of neighbouring properties from noise generated from the use.

4.6 One air conditioning unit has been proposed to be installed within the existing lightwell at basement level. A noise report and a sustainability assessment have been included in support of the application, and this includes details of the proposed noise levels in line with Camden's standards. The Council's Environmental Health Officer has assessed the application and considers that subject to conditions, the suggested location is suitable for plant and the standards can be met. They have recommended the details of the proposed plant are secured via condition so to ensure the proposals do not harm the amenity of residents.

4.7 Due to the nature of the floorspace being at basement level, there is no natural light or outlook. The uses proposed do not require natural light to function and as mechanical ventilation is included within the proposal, it is considered that an acceptable standard of accommodation would be achieved in this instance. The applicant has confirmed that the internal ceiling height across the site varies from 2.7m to 2.8, across the majority of the site, lowered to approx. 2.5m where there are beams. This is considered to be acceptable for basement facilities.

5.0 Transport

5.1 The site benefits from a PTAL rating of 6b and therefore, no objection is held to the loss of the car park.

5.2 Development Policy DP18 (Paragraphs 18.12 and 18.13) requires development to provide cycle parking facilities in accordance with the minimum requirements of our cycle parking standards (Appendix 2 of Camden Development Policies

document). The Council also expect development to provide cycle parking facilities in accordance with the minimum requirements of the London Plan.

5.2 The development proposes to provide 6 cycle parks in the basement in the form of three Sheffield stands, which are accessed via a redundant vehicle ramp. The cycle parking facilities meet the minimum cycle parking requirements of the London Plan, and are compliant with Camden's Policy Guidance CPG7. A condition is recommended to be added to secure the details of the cycle parking prior to the occupation of the site.

6.0 Sustainability

6.1 Camden's LDF Policy DP22 (Promoting sustainable design and construction) states that the Council will require development to incorporate sustainable design and construction measures. Policy CS13 paragraph 13.9 expects development or alterations to existing buildings to include proportionate measures to be taken to improve their environmental sustainability where possible. All developments are expected to reduce their carbon dioxide emissions by following the steps in the energy hierarchy (be lean, be clean and be green) to reduce energy consumption.

6.2 Whilst the proposed floor area of 272 sqm falls short of the requirement trigger for a BREEAM statement, consideration has been paid to sustainability and an Energy Statement has been submitted in support of any application.

7.0 Other matters

7.1 Objections have been received from the Freeholders of the property. The lease is a civil matter and is not a material planning consideration in this instance. However, the leaseholders are reminded that the Freeholders consent must be obtained before starting any works on site.

8.0 Conclusion

8.1 Due to the proposal relating to a basement unit of 275sqm in a central London location, it is considered that the proposed uses are considered acceptable, subject to the recommended conditions. It is not considered that the proposal would harm the amenity of the neighbours nor occupiers and is recommended for approval.

The decision to refer an application to Planning Committee lies with the Director of Regeneration and Planning. Following the Members Briefing panel on Monday 23rd January 2017, nominated members will advise whether they consider this application should be reported to the Planning Committee. For further information, please go to www.camden.gov.uk and search for 'Members Briefing'.