

Delegated Report		Analysis sheet	Expiry Date:	28/11/2017
		N/A / attached	Consultation Expiry Date:	02/11/2017
Officer			Application Number(s)	
Kristina Smith			2017/4458/P and 2017/5510/L	
Application Address			Drawing Numbers	
1no. Public Telephone outside British Museum Great Russell Street LONDON WC1B 3DG			Refer to Decision Notices	
PO 3/4	Area Team Signature	C&UD	Authorised Officer Signature	
Proposal(s)				
Change of use from BT telephone box (Sui Generis) to retail unit (Class A1) and associated alterations				
Recommendation(s):	Refuse Planning Permission Grant Listed Building Consent			
Application Type:	Full Planning Permission and Listed Building Consent			

Conditions or Reasons for Refusal:	Refer to Draft Decision Notices			
Informatives:				
Consultations				
Adjoining Occupiers:	No. of responses	02	No. of objections	02
Summary of consultation responses:	<p><u>A site notice was displayed between 06/10/2017 and 27/10/2017</u> <u>A press advert was published between 12/10/2017 and 02/11/2017</u></p> <p>Objections were received from 112 Bedford Court Mansions and 8 Boswell Street on the following grounds:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of iconic telephone box • Negative impact on streetscape, residents and overall amenity • Queues of people will be an eyesore and will block pavement • ■ Already other outlets selling coffee, ice cream etc. which spoil the pavement 			
CAAC/Local groups* comments: *Please Specify	<p><u>The Bloomsbury Association objects to this application on the following grounds:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The standard Design & Access Statement that makes no reference to the particular context in which the kiosk is located, to its high profile location nor to the sensitivity of its heritage. We also note that no pre-application discussions have taken place with the Council's officers or with any interested parties. 2. No consideration is given to the impact of the appearance of the kiosk in its new use from the Bloomsbury Conservation Area nor to the impact on the setting of the grade I listed British Museum and adjacent grade II* listed railings. We have viewed a similar kiosk in Russell Square and are concerned at its visual impact. This proposal will impact adversely on the conservation area and on the setting of listed buildings, contrary to Policy D2 of the Local Plan. 3. The kiosk is one of four similar, listed K6 telephone kiosks arranged in two pairs, symmetrically placed on either side of the main entrance gates to the Museum. The proposal fails to recognise the importance of this and the potential to erode the value of the group composition by one kiosk appearing different to the others. 4. There are plenty of outlets for buying coffee on Great Russell Street, on Museum Street and in the Museum courtyard. The kiosk door will be open most of the time and will add excessive clutter to an already severely cluttered footway with high pedestrian footfall. There are already ice cream vans, roasted peanut and hot dog stands on the pavement outside the Museum with cafe vans inside the railings and the proposal, with its associated advertising, will add further harmful visual clutter. 5. Great Russell Street is excessively cluttered with tourist and municipal tat despite being subject to major public realm renewal as part of the Council's Boulevard Project a few years ago. As in Russell Square, the proposed use will extend to informally capture surrounding pavement space with further clutter, waste, discarded wrappings and cups. The application does not 			

acknowledge this and we see no information submitted to explain how these proposals will be coordinated with the Council's highway, urban realm and hard landscape management for the street to achieve good design, contrary to Policy D1.

6. The space outside the Museum has high footfall and is particularly congested. When Crossrail becomes operational, there is expected to be a further increase in pedestrian footfall. We have previously expressed concern to the Council that not enough has been done to deal with Removal of existing street/pavement clutter, including the various unsightly structures that occupy the public realm. This proposal will add more clutter, further obstruct pedestrian flow and add to what is already a serious safety hazard for pedestrians. The proposal does not conserve and enhance the heritage value of open space that makes a significant contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation areas or to the setting of heritage assets, contrary to Policy A2 of the Local Plan.

7. The Association endorses the points made by the Metropolitan Police in their recent comments on applications 2017/5180-85/A. While this proposal will deal with some of the serious antisocial behaviour issues raised, it creates other problems.

8. These kiosks are tourist destinations in their own right and, with open door and telephone receiver in hand, provide the backdrop to many photos each day. Given the high heritage profile of this particular location, it would seem eminently more appropriate for the Museum to be encouraged to take over the restoration, management and maintenance of all four kiosk as heritage assets in their care.

9. The application does not demonstrate good quality design that will enhance Bloomsbury's streetscape and would therefore breach the Council's planning policy and of its supplementary planning guidance.

Site Description

The site contains a Grade II listed K6 phone kiosk, located on the north side of Great Russell Street opposite Museum Mansions. The site is located in the Bloomsbury Conservation Area.

The phone kiosk is located close to the south east corner of the British Museum. It is part of a pair of kiosks on the right of the entrance to the British Museum, opposite Museum Mansions. The two kiosks are separated by a Grade II* listed granite column serving the Museum railings for the main entrance gateway.

Relevant History

APPLICATION SITE

2015/0870/P & 2015/0984/L - 1. Change of use of BT telephone box to self-contained retail kiosk (Class A1) 2. Removal of telephone equipment, replacement of glass and modification to handle to allow locking – **Refused planning permission on the grounds of impact on pedestrian safety; Granted Listed Building Consent**

NEARBY SITE

2016/6047/P & 2016/6161/L - Change of use of telephone box to office pod (sui generis) and associated alterations - **Granted 06/03/2017**

Relevant policies

LDF Core Strategy and Development Policies

National Planning Policy Framework (2012)

The London Plan 2016

The Camden Local Plan 2017

A1 – Managing the impact of development

D1 - Design

D2 – Heritage

TC1 – Quantity and Location of retail development

Bloomsbury Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy (2011)

Assessment

1.0 Proposal

1.1 The application seeks permission for the following:

- Change of use of BT telephone box (Sui Gen) to self-contained retail kiosk (Class A1)
- Removal of telephone equipment, replacement of glass and modification to handle to allow locking

1.2 An application for the same proposed works at the same application site has already been determined (see planning history). Given the policy context has not materially changed in relation to the main considerations, and there have been no changes in the proximity of the application site, the officer recommendation remains the same.

2.0 Assessment

2.1 The main considerations in the assessment of the application for planning permission are:

- Principle of change of use
- Design and Heritage
- Impact on amenity and pedestrian and highway safety

Principle of change of use

2.2 The proposals involve changing the use to a retail unit (Class A1) primarily for the sale of drinks and/or ice cream to passing pedestrians. It is proposed that the retail unit be run with the door open and staffed by one person. The units would operate from 0800 to 1800 Monday to Friday, 0800 to 1900 on Saturdays and 0900 to 1800 on Sundays and Bank Holidays.

2.3 The proposed change of use from a phone box to a retail shop is supported by TC1 (Quantity and location of retail development) which seeks to increase retail floorspace in a Specialist Retail Areas. Phone boxes are generally underutilised due to the use of mobile phones and are recognised for attracting antisocial behaviour. The proposed use re-invents the phone box and enables a very small increase in retail floorspace.

2.4 Trading from the highway would require a trading licence and the retail kiosk proposed would need to be designated for street trading which would follow the licensing committee process for approval. If the proposals were considered acceptable then a condition would be added that ensures that the permission granted is personal to the applicant only and were the unit to not be used for retail purposes it would be returned to the original use as a telephone kiosk.

Design and Heritage

2.5 Special regard has been attached to the desirability of preserving the listed building and its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses, as well the character and appearance of the conservation area under s.16, s.66 and s.72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended by the Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013.

Impact on Listed Phone Box

2.6 The proposal would involve the removal of the telephone equipment and installation of a self-

contained modular unit into the K6 phone kiosk. The glass would be replaced with toughened glass and a new locking mechanism behind the existing "pull" plate. The modular kiosk would be on rollers and would not be fixed to the existing K6 kiosk. It is not considered that these alterations would bring about any material change to the character and appearance of the phone box. The Applicant proposes a rolling maintenance programme to see the kiosks refurbished every two years. The maintenance programme would involve a complete overhaul, to include all exterior and interior paint and associate works and all paint used would be the same as that currently used by BT.

2.7 The use of the phone kiosk as a retail unit would secure the future of the under-utilised listed phone box. Whilst there would be some alterations to the original structure insofar that the telephone equipment would be removed and the use of the kiosk would not be as it was originally designed, it is considered that the benefits arising from the proposed maintenance programme, which would help ensure its continued conservation, would outweigh the loss of original fabric.

Impact on Grade I Listed Building (British Museum)

2.8 The kiosk is located outside the listed railings of the British Museum near to the south-east corner, a substantial distance from the main entrance. Due to the scale of the kiosk compared to the scale of the British Museum, the proposed alterations are not considered to cause harm to the setting of the Grade I listed building.

2.9 The proposals do not involve the display of any adverts and any advertisements would require separate advertisement consent and listed building consent.

2.10 Therefore it is considered the proposals would preserve the character and appearance of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area and as such the proposals are considered acceptable in design and listed building terms.

Impact on amenity and pedestrian and highway safety

2.11 There is a distance of just 3.8metres from the phone kiosk to the edge of the pavement and there is a street tree, lamp post and parking meter within 5 metres of the kiosk. It is considered that were queues to form at the kiosk whilst it is in use, there is insufficient space for pedestrians to safely pass by without hindrance and potentially stepping into the road. The British Museum is a very busy tourist attraction and there is constant flow of tourists and commuters using the pavement. The busy footway would be obstructed by users of the kiosk to an unacceptable extent, contrary to Policy T1, which seeks to ensure that the pedestrian environment promotes walking.

2.12 It is considered that due to the very small size of the kiosk and the proposed function the change of use would have no adverse impact on any nearby residential occupiers (on the opposite side of Great Russell Street) in terms of noise. Were the proposals to be considered acceptable then conditions would be added to the decision notice that restrict the hours of opening and prevents any tables, bins, chairs or A-boards cluttering the pavement and prevent any primary cooking on site.

2.13 There would be little servicing required as the self-contained modular unit would contain everything required for the day to day running of the retail kiosks. The kiosk would need to be serviced every day in respect of dry stock, water and / or saleable goods. Waste removal would be part of the same daily process, whereby the operators would remove any waste at the end of each day. As there is a parking area adjacent to the pavement where the kiosk is located it considered that the servicing could make use of the parking bays. As a result there would be no adverse effect on highway safety.

Recommendation

2.14 It is recommended that planning permission be refused on pedestrian safety grounds. As the proposals are considered acceptable in listed building terms it is recommended that listed building consent be granted subject to conditions.