

Delegated Report		Analysis sheet	Expiry Date:	25/01/2018
		N/A / attached	Consultation Expiry Date:	11/01/2018
Officer			Application Number(s)	
Sofie Fieldsend			2017/6662/P	
Application Address			Drawing Numbers	
Unit 3, 10 Bloomsbury Way London WC1A 2SL			See draft decision notices	
PO 3/4	Area Team Signature	C&UD	Authorised Officer Signature	
Proposal(s)				
Installation of widened front entrance door				
Recommendation(s):	Refuse 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	00	No. of objections	00
			No. electronic	00		
Summary of consultation responses:	<p>A site notice was displayed on the 20/12/2017 and the consultation period expired on the 10/01/2018.</p> <p>A press notice was advertised on 21/12/2017 and expired on 11/01/2018.</p> <p>No responses were received.</p>					
Bloomsbury CAAC response:	<p>Bloomsbury CAAC objected on the following grounds:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The proposal to widen the door opening at the bottom of a vertical strip of glazing will look piecemeal and awkward. Either the whole vertical strip should be widened to the proposed width of the door (ie. the windows on the floor above should be widened too) or the door should be kept within the current two reveals provided by the stonework either side. 2) As it stands the proposal is not acceptable and the BCAAC objects that it would lower the standard of design of the building and thus be detrimental to the CA 					

Site Description

The application site relates to Unit 3 (Granted flexible A1/A3 use under planning reference 2014/2783/P) is located within a nine storey office building on a triangular site bounded by New Oxford Street, Bury Place and Bloomsbury Way. The application site is located within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area. It is not a listed building, however it was highlighted as making a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area in the conservation area appraisal.

Although the address relates to 10 Bloomsbury Way, the replacement door faces onto the junction of New Oxford Street and Bury Place. The street and surrounding area are primarily commercial at ground floor level. The site is located outside of a designated central London retail frontage.

Relevant History

St Georges Court, 2-12 Bloomsbury Way and 2-28 New Oxford Street, WC1A 25L

2012/1400/P -Erection of single storey glazed extension with associated roof terraces and new rooftop plant to provide additional office space (Class B1) at 9th floor level (following removal of existing 9th floor rooftop plant), change of use from offices to three flexible retail or restaurant units (Class A1/A3) at part ground floor level, reconfiguration of front entrance to corner of Bloomsbury Way and New Oxford Street, replacement of ground and first floor façade with double storey glazed frontages to all elevations and associated alterations for refurbishment of existing offices (Class B1). - **Granted subject to a S106 agreement on 31/3/13**

2014/2783/P – Variation of condition 3 (approved plans) of planning permission 2012/1400/P dated 31/01/2013 (for erection of single storey glazed extension with associated roof terraces and new rooftop plant to provide additional office space (Class B1) at 9th floor level (following removal of existing 9th floor rooftop plant), change of use from offices to three flexible retail or restaurant units (Class A1/A3) at part ground floor level, reconfiguration of front entrance to corner of Bloomsbury Way and New Oxford Street, replacement of ground and first floor façade with double storey glazed frontages to all elevations and associated alterations for refurbishment of existing offices (Class B1)), namely to change use of part ground floor office (Class B1) to retail (Class A1), enlarged roof terrace at 9th floor level, provision of acoustic screen at roof level and associated external and internal alterations (part retrospective) - **Granted subject to a S106 agreement on 3/12/14**

2017/6680/P – Installation of external louvres on south elevation. – **Refused on 29/01/18**

2017/6678/P - Details pursuant to Condition 8b (Plant machinery) of planning permission 2014/2783/P dated 03/12/2014 for 'Variation of condition 3 (approved plans) of planning permission 2012/1400/P dated 31/01/2013 (for erection of single storey glazed extension with associated roof terraces and new rooftop plant to provide additional office space (Class B1) at 9th floor level (following removal of existing 9th floor rooftop plant), change of use from offices to three flexible retail or restaurant units (Class A1/A3) at part ground floor level, reconfiguration of front entrance to corner of Bloomsbury Way and New Oxford Street, replacement of ground and first floor façade with double storey glazed frontages to all elevations and associated alterations for refurbishment of existing offices (Class B1)), namely to change use of part ground floor office (Class B1) to retail (Class A1), enlarged roof terrace at 9th floor level, provision of acoustic screen at roof level and associated external and internal alterations (part retrospective).'- **Refused on 29/01/18**

Relevant policies

National Planning Policy Framework (2012)

London Plan (2016)

Camden's Local Plan (2017)

Policy A1 – Managing the impact of development

Policy D1 – Design

Policy D2 – Heritage

Policy D3 – Shopfronts

Policy TC4 – Town Centre Uses

Supplementary Guidance

CPG 1 – Design

CPG 6 – Amenity

Bloomsbury Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy (2011)

Assessment

1.0 Background

1.1 The LPA tried to engage with the applicant to amend the scheme, no revisions were provided by the agent.

2.0 Proposal

2.1 Planning permission is sought for the installation of a replacement front entrance door which faces onto the corner of New Oxford Street and Bury Place. It will measure 1.35m wide by 2.8m high. The existing door measures 1.2m wide by 2.8m high.

3.0 Assessment

3.1 The main considerations in relation to this proposal are:

- Design and Appearance
- Impact on the amenity of adjoining occupiers

4.0 Design and Appearance

4.1 The Local Plan Policies D1 (Design) and D2 (Heritage) are aimed at achieving the highest standard of design in all developments. Policy D1 requires development to be of the highest architectural and urban design quality, which improves the function, appearance and character of the area; and Policy D2 states that the Council will preserve, and where appropriate, enhance Camden's rich and diverse heritage assets and their settings, including conservation areas and listed buildings.

4.2 The Bloomsbury Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy describes the site as the following:

'To the east of Museum Street, on the triangular site where New Oxford Street and Bloomsbury Way merge, stands St George's Court, Nos 2-28 (even) New Oxford Street and Nos 2-12 (even) Bloomsbury Way. This neo-classical office block, built to the designs of Lewis Soloman in 1947-50 as part of the postwar Lessor scheme, is monumental in scale, comprising nine storeys clad in a brown brick with stone dressings. It was built with various functions at street level including a public house and originally a bank at the western apex (now an army careers office). Its apex facing west forms a distinctive landmark visible from the Oxford Street and Tottenham Court Road junction, and its height creates a strong sense of enclosure alongside neighbouring buildings including the tall and bulky concrete mass of the postwar former Royal Mail sorting office to the south (situated outside the Conservation Area). On its north side, St George's Court flanks Hawksmoor's very fine grade I listed church of St George's Bloomsbury. St George's Court reads as a group with Commonwealth House in High Holborn (see paragraph 5.132), and with BUPA House, at Nos 15-19 (odd) Bloomsbury Way, another Lessor building which has six main storeys plus a triple-height mansard, giving the building a top-heavy appearance'.

4.3 The view east along New Oxford Street to St George's Court at the junction of Bloomsbury Street is also identified as being a key view within this part of the conservation area.

4.4 Policy D3 seeks to encourage a high standard of design in new and altered shopfronts, canopies, blinds, security measures and other features.

4.5 Policy TC4 seeks to ensure that the development of shopping, services, food, drink, entertainment and other town centre uses does not cause harm to the character, function, vitality and viability of a centre, the local area or the amenity of neighbours. The supporting text of this policy states that the Council 'will not grant planning permission for development that it considers would cause harm to the character, amenity, function, vitality and viability of a centre or local area'.

4.6 New Oxford Street has the character of a mainly twentieth-century urban boulevard with a grandly-scaled single- or double-storey commercial ground level. This character is consistent with that of High Holborn where the two streets meet, which is also within the Conservation Area and forms part of the host building's context. Commonwealth House forms the opposite side of the street from the site and its recent development has reinstated a cleanly detailed and regular ground-level street frontage of large glazed voids set in a stone-clad plinth, which complements the frontage of the host building. Both the host building and Commonwealth House are Positive Contributors to the Conservation Area, and their commercial street frontages are a significant part of their contribution.

4.7 The South East elevation which faces onto the corner of New Oxford Street and Bury Place is characterised by a double storey full height slot which is characterised by clean lines and detailing which is consistent with the regular openings along New Oxford Street frontage. The windows and door vertically align and maintain the same width across the two floors. The proposal to insert a wider door at ground floor will jar with the consistent and crisp detailing of the building and make the door appear out of proportion with the windows above. This would detract from the harmonious design and alignment of the existing windows above and would appear at odds with the remainder of this elevation.

4.8 The Council has advised that the applicant that widening the slot above across its full height to match the width of the new door while maintaining attention to the building's detail may overcome this issue.

4.9 The Bloomsbury CAAC's comments also reflect the Council's concerns and have suggested that either the whole vertical strip should be widened to the proposed width of the door (ie. the windows on the floor above should be widened too) or the door should be kept within the current two reveals provided by the stonework either side.

Access

4.10 Paragraph 132 of the NPPF state that 'when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation'. Paragraph 133 further adds that where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to or total loss of significance of a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss.

4.11 It is noted that the building has recently been renovated after planning permission was granted in 2013 (2012/1400/P) and revised in 2014 (Ref. 2014/2783/P) for external alterations and the creation of a mixed use development. The width of the existing door, granted under planning ref. 2014/2783/P on 3rd December 2014 complied with the building regulations at the time. Although it is acknowledged that these have since been updated in October 2015 which request a minimum effective clear width of

doors on new buildings of 1000mm and 775mm to existing buildings. The current doorway complies the 775mm required for existing buildings.

4.12 The original permissions for the re-development of the whole building carefully considered the design to ensure that it preserved and enhanced this positive contributor within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area. In line with NPPF the Council has to give substantial weight to any level of harm to designated heritage assets. The access benefits of a wider door could likely be retained if the applicant applied a design approach which did not harm the building in the manner of the current proposal.

Conclusion

4.13 The proposal appears to have been prepared without consideration of its impact on the existing building and the importance of the street level frontage. The design approach will cause harm to character of the host property which is positive contributor to the wider conservation area and is not considered to preserve or enhance the Bloomsbury Conservation Area. For the reasons discussed above the minor access benefit does not outweigh the heritage harm. This proposal is therefore contrary to Policies D1, D2 and D3 of Camden's Local Plan.

5.0 Amenity

5.1 The replacement door's scale, siting and design are not considered to have an adverse impact on the amenity enjoyed in any of the neighbouring properties.

6.0 Recommendation

6.1 Refuse planning permission