



Planning and Regeneration
London Borough of Camden
2nd Floor
5 Pancras Square
London
N1C 4AG

13th March 2018

Dear Sirs,

28 Fitzroy Square, London W1T 6DD

We are instructed by our clients, Generation Media - the freeholders of the above property, to submit the enclosed Planning and Listed Building Application for:-

“Demolition of floorspace at first floor and extension at ground floor with internal alterations from basement to third floor levels, excavation to front lightwell to provide damp proofing and storage and installation of new AC plant, all in association with the continued use of the building as an office (B1a).”

28 Fitzroy Square is grade II* listed and lies within a conservation area. Accordingly, we enclose with this application the following documents:-

- Location Plan;
- Existing and proposed Elevations and Floor Plans (refs SKK2131/002 Rev A, 101 ,102 ,103,104, 105, All Rev F 110 rev G, 111 rev B, 112 rev A, 113 rev A);
- Completed Application Forms and Certificate A;
- CIL Forms;
- Heritage Statement by Heritage Collective containing photographs of the existing site;
- Basement Impact Assessment by Thomasons (screening);
- Noise Impact Assessment relating to new plant;
- Photographs of sample materials;
- A fee of £465; and
- A justification within this letter for the design and access principles and general planning considerations behind the proposal.

This application follows extensive pre-application discussions with planning and heritage officers reference 2017/4978/PRE.

Site and Surrounding Area

The application site is situated in Fitzrovia to the western side of Fitzroy Square. The Georgian square is of early nineteenth century construction. The application concerns No. 28 Fitzroy Square which is Grade II*listed as part of the wider terrace (Nos. 20 to 32 Fitzroy Square). The terrace, which lines the west side of Fitzroy Square, was added to the National Heritage List for England on the 10th June 1954 (List UID: 1112996).

No. 28 Fitzroy Square dates to the 1830s and was part of the last phase of development on the Square. The townhouses were built for aristocratic families, though the building was previously occupied by the Magistrates Association and has a permitted office use. The building has been subject to a number of modern and unsympathetic changes and the current floorspace configuration is not suited to modern office working.

The front elevation of the building forms part of a terrace which is characterised by a stucco façade with arched ground floor sliding sash windows and square sash windows to the upper floors. The front elevation of 28 Fitzroy Square and the terrace, within which it sits, remain relatively unchanged.

Relevant Planning History

The rear of Nos. 21-30 Fitzroy Square has been the subject of much amendment over time. The area to the rear of the Fitzroy Square properties is characterised by large rear extensions, some of which are multi storey and extend the full depth of the property. The context for No. 28 Fitzroy Square has therefore changed overtime, resulting in the rear of 28 Fitzroy Square becoming almost completely enclosed, surrounding by neighbouring developments. Fitzroy Mews, a residential development, provides the rear boundary to the site and provides a three storey enclosure to the rear.

8970047: Listed building consent was granted on the 14/06/1989 for *the 'Alterations to basement involving relocation and addition of lavatories alterations to partitions installation of new ceilings and services and redecoration'*.

8770104: Listed building consent was granted on the 20/05/1987 for *'Works of repairs and maintenance and minor alterations at 3rd floor level'*.

TP52752/25/09/61: Planning permission was granted on the 27/10/1961 for the *'The use of 28 Fitzroy Square as Embassy Offices on the basement, ground and first floors, and as a residential maisonette on the second and third floors'*.

TP52752/12494: Planning permission was refused on the 28/10/1955 for the *'use of the third floor of No. 28, Fitzroy Square, St. Pancras, for office purposes'*.

TP52752/8528: Planning permission was granted on the 09/09/1955 for the *'erection of an addition at first floor level at the rear of No. 28, Fitzroy Square and roofing over of the basement yard in connection with the use of the basement, ground, first and second floors as offices by the National Spastics Society'*.

The planning history of the terrace is of particular relevance to the consideration of this application:-

No.26 Fitzroy Square

2016/1779/P & 2016/2501/L: Planning permission and listed building consent were granted on the 05/08/2016

for the 'Change of use between 2nd and 4th floors from office (B1) and ancillary residential accommodation to form 2x residential units: 1bed at second and 2bed at third and fourth floors including replacement three storey rear extension and associated alterations.'

No.27 Fitzroy Square

2014/3044/P & 2014/3078/L: Planning permission and listed building consent were granted on the 14/07/2014 for the 'Erection of a single storey ground floor rear infill extension, new door opening in existing ground floor rear extension, new skylight in rear courtyard and alterations and additions to the front lightwell'.

These properties and their planning history is further discussed within the pre-application advice section below.

Pre Application Advice

In December 2017 pre-application advice was sought for a larger scheme which sought to provide a full width extension at ground floor (similar to that which was consented at No.27 in 2014 in consultation with Historic England 2014/3044/P and 2014/3078/L) and retention of the existing half width extension at first floor.

The planning and heritage case supporting the scheme for the ground floor full width extension was that there is a clear precedent set by the recent planning permission consented and implemented scheme at no.27. In finding that the scheme at 27 Fitzroy Square was acceptable the Officer's Delegated Report determined that the full width rear extension was acceptable in relation to impact on the listed building and the conservation area for the following reasons:-

- the proposal, at single storey above ground level, is considered to be in keeping with the scale of the original four storey building;
- the area at the rear of FS properties is characterised by large rear extensions, some of which are multi storey and extend the full width of the property, in particular the Mews building to the rear is two stories and borders the site directly. As such the proposal is considered to be in keeping with the character of rear extensions in the area;
- the proposal would maintain a courtyard to the rear and maintain the existing remaining original ground floor rear window;
- the proposal will be finished in materials which match the existing extension.

Notwithstanding the approved scheme at no.27 the pre application advice stated that:-

"The main issue at play here is about the acceptability of infilling to the rear courtyard and how this would impact the special interest of the listed building. Each site (no.s26-28) is slightly different but there is a consistent volume/level of infill which has been allowed across each of the sites. The Council has allowed the same amount infill across each of the adjacent buildings by allowing either;

- ***infilling of the courtyard at ground floor level (above basement); OR***
- ***a two storey (above basement) part width infill extension (Refer to fig 1 below)."***

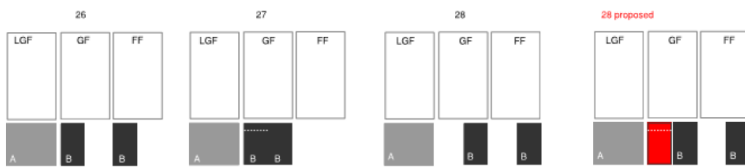


Figure 1: Diagram showing level of rear development as existing and proposed at no.s26-28

Following the pre-application advice, this application seeks consent for the approach which has been accepted at no.27, i.e. a full width ground floor extension with no extension at first floor.

The Proposed Scheme

The proposals are fully described within the heritage report, but the main proposed changes are to the internal layouts and the extension to the rear of the site.

At basement, in accordance with the pre-application advice, it is proposed that the internal layouts which are less sensitive to change are amended. Pipe routes are run within a suspended ceiling at this level.

The application proposes that the storage areas to the front of the property are excavated by approximately 500 mm to provide damp proofing to enable use for cycle storage and staff games room. The enclosed basement impact screening report concludes that the proposed lowering of the floor slab in the two large pavement vaults will not adversely affect:-

- Surface flow and flooding;
- Subterranean Flow;
- Slope Stability.

Further investigations are required before the final design can be prepared, these comprise trial hole excavations to determine the existing foundation arrangement and ground condition. Once these have been completed the detailed design for the necessary structural works can be prepared. If it is found the existing foundation extend to an adequate depth it may not be necessary to carry out underpinning.

At ground floor the main entrance will remain unaltered with removal of internal doors but retention of wall nibs to reinstatement of an opening into the new reception area and removal of the internal doors which we understand are not historic. A new glass partitioning wall is proposed. At the rear of the building it is proposed that the current half width building line is extended to the boundary of the site whilst retaining a light well to the rear door at ground floor, which mirrors that which has been deemed acceptable and granted planning permission at the neighbouring property, no.27. The proposed extension results in an increase of approximately 17.5 sqm at ground floor.

At first floor it is proposed that the half width extension, granted in 1955 is demolished. This has a similar volume to the proposed extension and is therefore providing a consistent volume / level of infilling which has been allowed across neighbouring sites. The demolition is approximately 17.5 sqm of office space at first floor.

At first floor a new terrace is proposed. This will be used by office staff for break out area. The roof terrace has

been designed to be set back from the roofs of Fitzroy Mews. A glazed balcony is proposed. New air conditioning plant is proposed to be located on the new terrace. The units will be modern low noise units but will be screened by acoustic housing. The application is accompanied by a noise report which demonstrates that there will be no impact on neighbouring occupiers.

The second and third floors have new room openings, but these are minor changes and retain the historic room pattern.

As requested the proposed servicing strategy is now shown on the plans. It is proposed that chassis unit (floor mounted) fan coil units are fed from external condensers (depicted on the plans) via chilled pipework that, where possible, run between existing joists, and run vertically through the building via an internal riser (also shown on the plans). The exception to this principle is the basement, where we intend to use the existing ceiling void to house chilled pipework and ceiling mounted FCUs in three locations. All electrical cables will be concealed within floor voids to either feed low level small power and data or ceiling feeds for floors below on upper floors. No floorboxes are proposed.

Where possible it is intended for cabling routes to run in parallel with the joists with the minimum of notching of joists. The existing electrical services cupboard situated in the entrance hall is intended to be relocated adjacent gas and water services in the basement and the hall made good. All redundant conduits and risers are to be removed and the building fabric and mouldings made good.

Policy Considerations

The statutory development plan for the application site comprises the London Plan 2016 (consolidated since 2011) together with Camden's Local Plan June 2017. Also of relevance is national guidance, most notably that within the NPPF of March 2012.

In the context of those policies the following are relevant:-

London Plan

Policy 4.1 - promotes and enables the continued development of a strong, sustainable and increasingly diverse economy across all parts of London, ensuring the availability of sufficient and suitable workspaces in terms of type, size and cost, supporting infrastructure and suitable environments for larger employers and small and medium sized enterprises, including the voluntary and community sectors.

Policy 4.2 - relates to offices. Bullet point C seeks to encourage renewal and modernisation of the existing office stock in viable locations to improve its quality and flexibility.

This proposal is wholly in accordance with this overarching aim. It will deliver a modern office layout suited to current business need and will ensure a viable future for the building.

The site lies with the Central Activity Zone (CAZ) and paragraph 4.17A raises concerns that in the CAZ the differential in office and residential land values has led to concern over the loss of office space to housing even though the area is exempt from government's liberalisation of Permitted Development rights. This application seeks to retain office use.

The Mayors SPD on CAZ's highlights that the CAZ has a strategic function in relation to a list of uses including uses connected with science, technology, **media**, communications and cultural sectors of regional, national and international importance.

Section 3 of the CAZ SPD recognises that change is an essential component in the continued success of places. Sensitive adaptation and re-use of the historic environment along with high standards of design in new development can help make better places and stronger, more inclusive communities that balance the value of the past with the potential of the future.

Camden's Local Plan 2017

Section 5 of the Camden Local Plan addresses the economy.

Policy E1 states that the Council will secure a successful and inclusive economy in Camden by creating the conditions for economic growth and harnessing the benefits for local residents and businesses including:-

“d. encourage the concentrations of professional and technical services, creative and cultural businesses and science growth sectors in the borough;

g. support Camden's industries by: i. safeguarding existing employment sites and premises in the borough that meet the needs of industry and other employers; ii. supporting proposals for the intensification of employment sites and premises where these provide additional employment and other benefits in line with Policy E2 Employment premises and sites.”

Policy E2 states that the Council will encourage the provision of employment premises and sites in the Borough, protect premises or sites that are suitable for continued business use, in particular premises for small businesses, businesses and services that provide employment for Camden residents and those that support the functioning of the CAZ or the local economy.

Policy E2 also states that the Council will consider higher intensity redevelopment of premises or sites that are suitable for continued business provided that, amongst others, the level of employment floorspace is increased or at least maintained.

In principle there is significant policy support for the retention and intensification of the office use on the site to support the location of a new media company.

As the property is listed, heritage considerations are also important. Policy D1 is a design policy but recognises that high quality design in development must respect the local context and character and must preserve or enhance the historic environment and heritage assets in accordance with Policy D2 Heritage.

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, listed buildings, archaeological remains, scheduled ancient monuments and historic parks and gardens and locally listed heritage assets.

As a designated heritage asset the Council will not permit loss or substantial harm and within the conservation area the proposals have a requirement to preserve or, where possible, enhance the character or appearance of the area.

To preserve or enhance the Borough's listed buildings, the Council will resist the total or substantial demolition of a listed building, resist proposals for a change of use or alterations and extensions to a listed building where this would cause harm to the special architectural and historic interest of the building; and resist development that would cause harm to significance of a listed building through an effect on its setting.

An assessment of the architectural and historic interest of the building and an assessment of the effects of the proposed development is contained within the enclosed heritage statement.

The NPPF

On 27th March 2012, the Government published the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The NPPF replaces previous government guidance that had built up over the years and was contained in various PPS's, Ministerial Statements, Circulars and advice to Chief Planning Officers. The document is, as it explains at the beginning (paragraph 3), a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. In this respect, paragraph 7 explains that there are three dimensions to sustainable development; namely economic, social and environmental. Expanding on these dimensions to sustainable development, paragraph 7 continues by explaining:-

“An economic role – contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, but ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation; and by identifying and co-ordinating development requirements, including the provision of infrastructure;

A social role – supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by creating a high quality built environment, with accessible local services that reflect the community's needs and support its health, social and cultural wellbeing; and

An environment role – contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; and, as part of this, helping to improve biodiversity, use natural resources prudently, minimising ways to pollution and mitigate and adapt to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy.”

In the context of this guidance it is relevant that the application proposal forms an economic role. The site lies within the CAZ and the amendments are proposed to facilitate the occupation of the building by a London based media company who are looking to expand and move from Marylebone. The application site is well located in relation to public transport. The proposals will therefore deliver economic development and in doing so help to achieve a strong and responsive economy contributing to the vitality and viability of the CAZ.

Paragraph 14 of the NPPF establishes the Government's overarching support and presumption in favour of sustainable development and thereby indicates that:-

“At the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan making and decision taking

For decision taking this means:

- **Approving development proposals that accord with the Development Plan without delay; and**
- **Where the Development Plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out of date, granting planning permission unless:**
 - **Any adverse impacts in doing so would significantly or demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole;**
 - **Specific policies in this Framework indicate that development should be restricted."**

Section 1 of the NPPF provides guidance on building a strong, competitive economy and states that the Government is committed to ensuring that the planning system does everything it can to support sustainable economic growth.

Paragraphs 126-141 relate to conserving and enhancing the historic environment and these are considered specific policies by which sustainable economic development should be assessed. In accordance with the guidance the enclosed heritage statement describes the significance of the heritage asset and assesses the potential impact.

Summary and Conclusion

The proposals encompassed in this application provide an opportunity to enhance 28 Fitzroy Square to facilitate the occupation by Generation Media. My client has entered into pre-application consultation with Officers at the Council and the application reflects the received pre-application advice.

It is recognised that the site lies within the Fitzroy Conservation Area and is Grade II* listed. The submitted heritage assessment concludes that the internal and external works will update the standards of accommodation whilst retaining and respecting the fabric of interest within No. 28 Fitzroy Square. The changes will preserve the architectural and historical value of the application site, therefore preserving and enhancing significance of both the listed building and conservation area.

The scheme has been designed to also respect the surrounding context of the site. The proposed extensions lie within an area enclosed by neighbouring property extensions and Fitzroy Mews to rear boundary. The proposed extension will be of high quality and the overall development will be in keeping with the area generally.

It is, as such, a sustainable development which warrants, we consider, planning consent and look forward to discussing it with you.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Holly Mitchell'.

Holly Mitchell

Director

Encs.