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P1414/A-35649(R1)
REV. NO. 1342
ALLOWED

14/11/83

CANNON

Messrs Gordons
5 Coptic Street
LONDON
WC1A 1NH

Your reference

JSG/AFM

Our reference

T/APP/X5210/A/83/2144/PH2

Date

11.11.83

Gentlemen

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1971, SECTION 36 AND SCHEDULE 9
APPEAL BY DOUGLAS HARVEY PROPERTIES AND JOSUJAMA DEVELOPMENTS LTD
APPLICATION NO:- 35649(R1)

1. As you are aware I have been appointed by the Secretary of State for the Environment to determine the above appeal. This appeal is against the decision of the Camden London Borough Council to refuse planning permission for works of conversion to provide a self-contained flat on second and third floors including the formation of a new entrance at rear ground floor and garage, first floor extension for additional office space and installation of new shop frontage, at 5 Coptic Street, London WC1. I have considered the written representations made by you and by the Council and also those made by the Bloomsbury Association and by interested persons. I inspected the premises on 12 October 1983. I understand that the plans to be considered in this appeal are those numbered A1, A2, B3 and B4.

2. From my inspection of the appeal premises and the surrounding area, and my consideration of the written representations, it seems to me that the main issues to be resolved in this case are firstly whether the proposals involve an unacceptable increase in office use; secondly whether the proposed extension of the appeal building would unreasonably restrict the sunlighting or daylighting of the adjoining building on the north side; thirdly whether the proposed flat would have a satisfactory access; and fourthly whether the proposed new shopfront would detract unduly from the character and appearance of the conservation area.

3. The appeal premises are on the south-west side of Coptic Street, about 40 m north from its junction with New Oxford Street. The site is within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area and within the Council's Museum Street area, where special policies apply following the abandonment of National Library proposals for the area in 1975. The statutory development plan for the area is the district plan which came into effect in January 1979, read in conjunction with the Greater London Development Plan, approved in 1976. The district plan provides, among other things, that office development will be restrained in the area south of Euston Road (which includes the appeal premises). However exceptions may be made where substantial planning advantages can be attained, such as the provision of new residential accommodation in the development (which could not otherwise be provided).

4. The district plan also refers to an environmental code by which the physical aspects of development proposals are assessed. That code incorporates the advice given in the Department of Environment's publication "Sunlight and Daylight". The district plan states that full consideration will be given to the aesthetic and environmental factors necessary to achieve the high level of design associated with conservation areas, in arriving at decisions concerning proposed development within those areas. Among the policies for the Museum Street area, included within the

district plan, are those aimed at preserving the existing mixed use character and appearance of the area, the rehabilitation of empty or under-used residential property and the raising of housing standards.

5. The amount of additional office space that is proposed in this case appears to be relatively small in floor area. It would seem to enable the first floor of the appeal building to be used more effectively than at present, in conjunction with a modest expansion of your own small business. It may be that the rehabilitation of the residential accommodation could be undertaken as a separate exercise. Nevertheless there would in my view be practical advantages, particularly in securing the provision of the proposed dwelling, if the office extension and the formation of the flat were combined in a single development. The proposed first floor extension would be preferable in my opinion to office use of part of the second floor, provided that it did not interfere unreasonably with the sunlighting or daylighting of nearby properties. I consider that the amount of the proposed extra office floor space is acceptable in this instance, despite the Council's general policy of restraint.

6. The refurbishment of the adjoining flats at Stedham Chambers now appears to be well under way. I understand that the main habitable rooms in those flats will face towards the north-west and north-east. There would be a kitchen at first floor level in the centre of the south-east side, but I find it difficult to believe that the appeal proposals would seriously interfere with the amount of sunlight reaching that window. Judging from the submitted plan B4 and my site inspection I do not consider that either the access passage at ground floor level or the access balcony at first floor level would be overshadowed by the main bulk of the proposals to a significantly greater degree than at present. I consider it important however, in the interests of the adjoining residents, that some daylight should be able to penetrate through the proposed balcony parapets. The details of how those parapets are to be constructed do not seem to be clearly shown on the submitted plans and I propose to reserve that matter for later approval.

7. I saw at my visit that the majority of residential properties in Coptic Street have their access from the front. There do not seem to be any accesses from Stedham Place, other than a gateway (now blocked off) to Stedham Chambers. I agree with the Council that Stedham Place is not as desirable as Coptic Street as an approach to the proposed residential accommodation. However the Council do not oppose the placing of the garage which would be associated with the proposed flat. The proposed rear entrance hall would be convenient for access to that garage and it would in my opinion be unreasonable to require a front entrance also to be provided.

8. The proposed shopfront would in my view be a considerable improvement on the existing appearance of the ground floor of the appeal premises. Although perhaps not entirely in keeping with the period of the building it would to my mind reflect a fashion which is found nearby and seems to fit in well with the late Georgian style of surrounding buildings. I do not consider that it would be unduly detrimental to the character or appearance either of the appeal premises themselves or of the conservation area.

9. I have taken into account all the other matters raised in the written representations, including the lack of parking control in Stedham Place, but those matters are in my opinion outweighed by the considerations which have led to my decision.

10. For the above reasons, and in exercise of the powers transferred to me, I hereby allow this appeal and grant planning permission for works of conversion to provide a self-contained flat on second and third floors including the formation of a new entrance at rear ground floor and garage, first floor extension for additional office space and installation of new shop frontage, at 5 Coptic Street, London WC1 in accordance with the terms of the application No. 35649(R1) dated 7 December 1982, and the plans submitted therewith as amended on 24 February 1983, subject to the following conditions:-

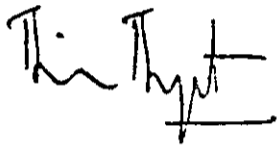
1. the development hereby permitted shall be begun not later than 5 years from the date of this permission; and
2. before any of the works hereby permitted are begun application for approval of the details of the proposed balcony parapets shall be made to the local planning authority.

11. Attention is drawn to the fact that an applicant for any approval required by a condition of this permission has a statutory right of appeal to the Secretary of State if approval is refused or granted conditionally or if the authority fail to give notice of their decision within the prescribed period.

12. The developer's attention is also drawn to the enclosed note relating to the requirements of the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970.

13. This letter does not convey any approval or consent which may be required under any enactment, byelaw, order or regulation other than section 23 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1971. Your attention is drawn to the provision of Section 277A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1971 (inserted into the Act by the Town and Country Amenities Act 1974) as amended by paragraph 26(2) of Schedule 15 of the Local Government Planning and Land Act 1980 which requires consent to be obtained prior to the demolition of any building in a conservation area.

I am Gentlemen
Your obedient Servant



B D BAGOT BA(Arch) MCP RIBA MRTPI FRSA
Inspector

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