



**24 HANWAY STREET**  
LONDON WC1T 1UH

PROPOSAL: Erection of a single storey extension at roof level for use as office space (Class B1), the installation of replacement balustrade on the second floor rear elevation, the installation of new balustrade on the third and fourth level on the rear, together with the installation of replacement front and rear elevation windows.

Application for planning permission reference: 2019/1985/P

14 May 2019

The Bloomsbury Association object to this application and wishes to make the following comments:

1. The Association have long been concerned by over development of buildings in the Hanway Street Conservation Area to the extent to which the character of the area is at risk of being entirely lost. Hanway Street and Hanway Place are part of the original street pattern that pre-dates Bloomsbury yet the former is still an important pedestrian route that connects Oxford Street to Great Russell Street. It is a gateway to Bloomsbury and hence our interest. As recognised long ago by the New West End Company in their first masterplan for Oxford Street, and by the City of Westminster in their recent Place Strategy for Oxford Street District, there is a huge opportunity for public realm improvement here that no recent intervention has grasped. It can be far better than a precarious rat run for taxis avoiding the jam at the junction of Oxford Street and Tottenham Court Road or as London's for most street market in Class A drugs.
2. This is an area under real threat and Crossrail is the catalyst. This is compounded by the area falling between two planning authorities and neither seem willing to accept the responsibility for being custodians for its unique heritage. It was a once forgotten, quiet backwater where proximity to Oxford Street and Tottenham Court Road allowed secondary businesses to thrive 24/7, inhabiting small buildings in a rich, mixed-use environment. Its character was badly damaged by the redevelopment of the warehouses and industrial buildings of the Gort Estate in the 70s by EMI to create what is now Central Cross. Subsequently, it was further eroded by the loss of its school and pub by redevelopment of 6-17 Tottenham Court Road. It is acknowledged that the current servicing arrangement for Primark was a huge mistake, which has severely impacted on the streetscape to turn the interface between the Hanway Street and Bloomsbury conservation areas into a lorry service park by day and a public toilet and crack house by night. Nor are we encouraged by the amalgamation of land parcels by Frogmore and Land Securities to create the large development recently completed on the Oxford Street frontage. The question, as with many of the projects that we are currently dealing with in the Bloomsbury Conservation Area, is to recognise when rejuvenation becomes over development to the extent that its impacts during the construction and occupation stages cannot be realistically managed to avoid irreversible harm. This appears to be the case here.
3. This is not careful refurbishment of an early twentieth-century building of a particular pedigree, an early work of an architect of note, nor is it sensitive infill. It is blatant over development of the site. We are concerned at the excessive bulk of this proposal and particularly at the additional floor and lift overrun, which will have a negative contribution to the conservation area. That number 32 has been extended by an additional floor is no justification for increasing the height of this building - It impacts severely on the scale of the street and particularly on daylight, sunlight and on the amenity of residential buildings on the opposite side of Hanway Place.



No verified computer-generated images or sunlight/daylight studies to illustrate the effect of the proposed massing are submitted in support of the application.

4. That said, there are many aspects of the proposal that also lead us to question its viability. There being only one means of escape seems unlikely to be acceptable to Building Control as would limited storey heights and the lack of any internal environmental control be unacceptable to commercial tenants. There also appears to be no provision for means of access, means of escape or toilet accommodation for those with disabilities, contrary to Local Plan policy and supplementary planning guidance. We would like to see a structural statement to confirm that the degree of structural change proposed is indeed feasible.
5. We are therefore skeptical that the proposal could be technically and commercially viable and that material changes would be required to make it so. We would like to see the effect of these changes before any permission is granted.
6. We would much rather see a car-free, mixed-use development including retail (or wholesale retail) at ground floor and basement levels to animate the street frontage.

The Association supports good quality design that will enhance the streetscape of Bloomsbury and Fitzrovia and endorse the objection to this proposal by Stephen Carter on behalf of the Hanway Place Residents' Association. We look to the Council to seek amendments or refuse this application for the reasons stated above.

We would be grateful if you would let us know of any further modification to the application and the decision, if it is to be determined under delegated powers.

Stephen Heath  
**On behalf of the Bloomsbury Association**

*Copies to:*  
Councillor Adam Harrison, London Borough of Camden  
Councillor Sue Vincent, London Borough of Camden  
Councillor Jonathan Glanz, City of Westminster  
Joshua Ogunleye, London Borough of Camden  
Bloomsbury Conservation Area Advisory Committee  
Hanway Place Residents' Association  
Fitzrovia Neighbourhood Association  
Charlotte Street Association  
Chair, Bloomsbury Association