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Date: 05/06/2019
Our ref: 22019/1301/PRE
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Elizabeth Flower,
 HaworthTompkins,
 33 Greenwood Place,
 London
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By email

www.camden.gov.uk/planning

Dear Ms Flower

Re: Warburg Institute, Woburn Square, WC1H

Thank you for submitting a pre-planning application enquiry for the above property which was received on 11/03/2019 together with the required fee of £494.51, received on 27/03/2019.

1. Drawings and documents

Pre-app enquiry document dated March 2019 and drawings received 11/03/2019.

2. Proposal

Erection of new extension within the rear courtyard to provide 360sqm new floorspace; new signage; external repairs to roof, brickwork, windows, etc. The proposals have been submitted following previous pre-application advice given under reference 2018/5957/PRE and seek advice following work on the detailed design of the proposed extension.

3. Site description

The application site comprises a seven storey c-shaped building with basement floor, fronting Gordon Square, Woburn Square and Torrington Square. The building is in use as a non-residential institution (D1 use class) and is occupied by the Warburg institute, except for the top floor which is leased by the Slade School of Art.

The application site is not listed, but is located within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area. The adjacent terraced buildings along Torrington Square (nos. 27 – 32) and Woburn Square (nos. 24 – 28) are Grade II Listed.

4. Relevant planning history

9501471 - Infilling of internal courtyard, part of rear garden and gap adjacent to 32 Torrington Square by an extension of part 5, part 4 floors, together with associated alterations to the existing building to provide new teaching rooms, library and office accommodation. Granted 25/01/1996, but not implemented.

PS9604361R1 - Erection of a heating plant room at basement level on the Woburn Square frontage together with associated ductwork attached to the flank elevation of the building and enclosed in brickwork. Granted 10/04/1997.

PS9804642 - Erection of a four storey infill extension at the rear of east wing between 1st and 4th floor levels to provide new ancillary office space to main educational use of building. Granted 29/10/1998.

PSX0205103 - Alterations to existing window opening, the provision of external paving and parapet walls on ground floor level and the installation of a disabled access ramp. Granted 24/02/2003.

5. Relevant policies and guidance

[National Planning Policy Framework 2019](#)

[The London Plan March 2016](#)

[Camden Local Plan 2017](#)

Policy A1 Managing the impact of development

Policy C2 Community facilities

Policy C6 Access for all

Policy E1 Economic development

Policy D1 Design

Policy D2 Heritage

Policy H2 Maximising the supply of self-contained housing from mixed-use schemes

Policy T1 Prioritising walking, cycling and public transport

Policy T2 Parking and car free development

[Camden Planning Guidance](#)

CPG Design 2019

CPG Amenity 2018

CPG Transport 2019

CPG Developer Contributions 2019

[Bloomsbury Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy 2011](#)

6. Assessment

The principle planning considerations are considered to be detailed design and trees and landscaping. Please refer to the previous pre-application report for a discussion of all relevant considerations.

7. Design

The Council's design policies are aimed at achieving the highest standard of design in all developments, including where alterations and extensions are proposed. Policy D1 of the Local Plan 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.

Camden's Local Plan is supported by CPG (Design) and the Bloomsbury Conservation Area Statement.

Description of works

- Erection of new two storey extension within the rear courtyard to provide 360sqm new floorspace.
- Installation of replacement roof.
- New signage.
- Brickwork louvre.

Two storey extension

The pre-application proposals include the erection of a new two storey extension within the existing courtyard area, where it would be bounded by the two wings of the existing building.

The extension would measure two storeys in height with a footprint of approximately 177sqm. The previous pre-application report advised that the proposed location and massing of the extension considered acceptable. It would sit within the courtyard area of the C-shaped building so that views of the extension would only be possible from the rear windows of properties along Woburn Square and Torrington Square. In the context of the existing building, it is considered a subordinate addition which would have limited impact on the appearance of the host building or Bloomsbury Conservation Area.

The latest proposals show the extension would be constructed of brick to match the existing material palette and would be a light colour to complement the white tiles of the rear elevation. It join the existing building by a glazed double height link on one side. Detail would be introduced with hit-and-miss brickwork and large glazed openings. The proposed materials and detailed design would differentiate the extension as a new addition yet respect the existing character, appearance and materials of the host building and are considered an appropriate response to the setting.

Replacement roof

The existing roof will be replaced and reconstructed in matching materials, design and profile. There would be no impact on the appearance of the building and these works are considered acceptable.

Installation of new signage

Four options have been put forward for new signage to the building – horizontal lettering to the Gordon Square elevation, standalone signage in the two corner lightwells, vertical lettering to the Woburn Square and Torrington Square elevations and a projecting 3D Sign to the Gordon Square elevation.

It is unlikely that the projecting 3D sign would be supported as it is not considered an appropriate nor sympathetic addition to the building. The two freestanding signs within the lightwell or the horizontal signs are likely to be considered acceptable (subject on their detailed design) as they would not obscure any architectural detail or interrupt the uniform facades of the building.

New louvre brickwork to side elevation

The proposals include the introduction of new hit-and-miss brick detailing to the elevation fronting Torrington Square to conceal new louvres behind. These are considered to be a minor alteration which would preserve the character and appearance of the building.

Conclusion

The principle of the courtyard extension is likely to be considered acceptable in terms of its location and massing, although limited details of its detailed design have been provided. It is recommended that further pre-app advice is sought once the design has progressed.

8. Trees and landscaping

The five existing trees within the courtyard area would need to be removed to make way for the rear extension. Policy A3 states that the Council will resist the loss of trees and vegetation of significant amenity, historic, cultural or ecological value, and will expect replacement trees or vegetation to be provided where the loss of significant trees or vegetation or harm to the wellbeing of these trees and vegetation has been fully justified.

The pre-application documents state that a green roof was considered for the extension roof but was eliminated due to 'overshadowing and maintenance concerns from UOL'. This is not considered sufficient justification given the existence of five fairly mature trees in this location which do not seem to be affected by a lack of sunlight. The Council would expect to see a green roof in this location and appropriate soft landscaping where possible to compensate for the loss of the existing trees and the subsequent harm to visual amenity.

9. Conclusion

The proposals are likely to be considered acceptable at application stage, although it is strongly recommended that a green roof is provide to compensate for the loss of the existing trees.

10. Planning application information

If you submit a planning application, I would advise you to submit the following for a valid planning application:

- Completed form – Full planning application
- An ordnance survey based location plan at 1:1250 scale denoting the application site in red.
- Floor plans at a scale of 1:50 labelled 'existing' and 'proposed'
- Roof plans at a scale of 1:50 labelled 'existing' and 'proposed'
- Elevation drawings at a scale of 1:50 labelled 'existing' and 'proposed'
- Section drawings at a scale of 1:50 labelled 'existing' and 'proposed'
- Design and access statement including heritage statement
- Planning statement (including consideration of Policy H2)
- Noise impact assessment
- Arboricultural report
- Sample photographs/manufacturer details of proposed materials
- The appropriate fee
- Please see [supporting information for planning applications](#) for more information.

We are legally required to consult on applications with individuals who may be affected by the proposals. We would put up a site notice on or near the site and, advertise in a local newspaper. The Council must allow 21 days from the consultation start date for responses to be received.

It is likely that that a proposal of this size would be determined under delegated powers, however, if more than 3 objections from neighbours or an objection from a local amenity group is received the application will be referred to the Members Briefing Panel should it be recommended for approval by officers. For more details click [here](#).

This document represents an initial informal officer view of your proposals based on the information available to us at this stage and would not be binding upon the Council, nor prejudice any future planning application decisions made by the Council.

If you have any queries about the above letter or the attached document please do not hesitate to contact Laura Hazelton on the number above.

Thank you for using Camden's pre-application advice service.

Yours sincerely,

Laura Hazelton

Planning Officer
Planning Solutions Team