



**35-37 (INCLUDING 35A AND 37A) AND 39-41 NEW OXFORD STREET; 10, 11 AND 12 MUSEUM STREET; 16/16A/18 WEST CENTRAL STREET
LONDON WC1A 1BN**

PROPOSAL: Temporary change of use (for 5 years) from office, nightclub, HMO and retail floorspace (Class B1, sui-generis and A1 uses) to performance venue (Class D2)

Application for planning permission reference: 2019/4294/P

28 October 2019

The Bloomsbury Association objects to this application and wishes to make the following comments.

1. The application is lacking any properly documented proposals to comment on other than the proposed change of use to D2, which is stated in the cover letter to be to accommodate Variant 31 in the first instance but could be any other assembly or leisure use in the future. D2 use is defined as: Assembly and leisure - Cinemas, music and concert halls, bingo and dance halls (but not night clubs), swimming baths, skating rinks, gymnasiums or area for indoor or outdoor sports and recreations (except for motor sports, or where firearms are used). The applicant is not specific in the formal proposal so approval would mean any of those uses would be lawful.
2. A 'temporary' permission for 5 years is sought, which is open-ended and renewable. That it is described as 'temporary' is no justification for presenting no evidence of compliance with adopted Local Plan policy.
3. There are no drawings. It is not possible to comment on the internal arrangement, external changes to the building already implemented, vehicle servicing management, waste storage and disposal, access control, crowd control, noise impact, crime impact, premises management, travel plan, etc. There is only a cover letter, a Planning Statement and a Design & Access Statement, all of which are non-binding, so it is not possible to ascertain whether the proposal accords with relevant Local Plan policies A1, A4, C5, C6, D1, D2, D3 and CC5d, as might reasonably be expected for such a change of use.
4. There is also a parallel application for a premises licence, reference APP\PREMISES-NEW\098312, which while not a planning consideration, contains information that is at variance from that contained in the Planning and Design & Access statements.
5. All the things that are missing would ordinarily become conditions or obligations to be satisfied prior to commencement of the use on any planning approval, which would be of no effect as the use has already started. It appears as a strategy to frustrate and delay the proper planning process and to present the Council with few grounds for enforcement. It is not an application that should have been validated in the first place. It includes a site location plan but lacks "any other plans, drawings and information necessary to describe the development which is the subject of the application" as required by Section 7, paragraph 1(c)(ii) of The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015. On this basis alone, it should be refused.
6. Section 5 of the application form states that the use has not already started. This is untrue so the application is factually incorrect and misleading.

7. We note that in a recent review in Time Out (September 17-23 2019, p67), a link was made to the use extending to the 35-storey hotel next door. This is not mentioned in the application.

The Association supports good quality design that will enhance Bloomsbury's streetscape, which this does not. We look to the Council to refuse this application because of its potentially adverse effect on the amenity of the immediate neighbourhood and, in particular, nearby residential buildings on West Central Street, Grape Street, Museum Street and Bloomsbury Way.

We would be grateful if you would let us know of any further modification to the application prior to its determination.

Stephen Heath

On behalf of the Bloomsbury Association

Copies to:

Councillor Sue Vincent, London Borough of Camden
Ben Farrant, London Borough of Camden
Bloomsbury Conservation Area Advisory Committee
South Bloomsbury Tenants and Residents Association
Covent Garden Community Association
Chair, Bloomsbury Association