



112 GREAT RUSSELL STREET
LONDON WC1B 3NQ

Proposal: Installation of three condenser units at first floor level behind parapet adjacent to existing plant, two to Great Russell Street and one to Bedford Avenue, relocated from basement level.

Application for planning permission: 2019/1289/P

Enforcement reference: EN19/0248

28 January 2020

Until further information becomes available, the Bloomsbury Association upholds the comments made on this application in their representation dated 22 April 2019. The application was revised in November 2019, we have discussed it with the YMCA Central Club and wish to make the following further comments.

1. This proposal should not be considered alone but together with the planning permission 2015/3605/P allowed at appeal, ref: APP/X5210/W/16/3147078, dated 04/10/2016, for 'Change of use of part ground floor and basement levels -4 and -5 from car park (sui generis) to 166 bedroom hotel (Class C1). This proposal is for the relocation of plant previously located in those basement areas to allow the change of use to an underground hotel to be implemented. The plant serves a different basement use, the YMCA Central Club, but it is in the same building and the impacts are the same and on the same noise sensitive residential uses as considered extensively by the Inspector at Appeal. This impact was not revealed at the time of the planning application for the underground hotel.

At the Construction Community Working Group meeting held with the construction team for the underground hotel on 20 January 2020, it was confirmed that a significantly larger hotel of 208 rooms was under construction. This may have greater impacts that need to be assessed in a number of areas, particularly ventilation, performance criteria for which are based not on volume but on number of people. It is acknowledged that this change is a material variation that would be submitted to the Council for consideration as a new retrospective planning application. We understand that the procedure for doing this has yet to be agreed.

The meeting was also told that ventilation for the hotel would make use of existing former car park ventilation ducts. Location is by no means clear but it is thought these would take in and exhaust air at podium roof level to the west side of the entrance to the YMCA Central Club on Great Russell Street. In principle, this might be regarded as an improvement on the original proposal considered by the Inspector. Additionally, room comfort would be provided by a VRV system.

This hotel plant all seems to be in the same location on Great Russell Street proposed for the condenser units that are the subject of this application and clearly the two proposals have to be considered together. While it is the same building, there appears to have been little coordination between respective developers in order that the cumulative impact of plant can be assessed together with other existing plant in the same location including confirmation there will be no harmful cross-contamination between respective inlet and discharge equipment.

2. The Council is referred to another recent decision of the Inspector at Appeal for the same building, ref: APP/X5210/C/19/3223807 and EN18/1022-3223807, concerning the proposal to erect metal plant screens to the proposed plant on Great Russell Street and to existing plant on Bedford Avenue.

3. The grant of planning permission on the basis of current information would be unsafe and inconsistent with the Council's and national planning policies. We therefore urge the Council to either refuse the application in its current form or defer determination until further information is received.

We would be grateful if you would let us know of any further modification to the application; the decision, if it is to be decided under delegated powers, or the meeting date if it is to be decided by Committee.

Stephen Heath
On behalf of the Bloomsbury Association

Copies to:
Councillor Adam Harrison, London Borough of Camden
Councillor Sue Vincent, London Borough of Camden
Matthew Dempsey, London Borough of Camden
Ben Farrant, London Borough of Camden
John Sheehey, London Borough of Camden
Raymond Yeung, London Borough of Camden
Alun Wood, YMCA Central Club
Chairman, Bedford Court Mansions Ltd
Steward, Bedford Estates
Local residents
Roger Wilson
Chair, Bloomsbury Association