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Via Planning Portal only

03 February 2020

Dear sir/madam,

**FULL PLANNING APPLICATION - THE TOWN & COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990
REFURBISHMENT OF FACADE WINDOWS
QUEEN COURT, QUEEN SQUARE, LONDON, WC1N 3BA / WC1N 3BB
PLANNING PORTAL REFERENCE: PP-08395035**

Please accept this covering letter as an accompaniment to the full planning application for the above works.

The Site:

The application site is located at Queen Court, occupied by no's 24-28 Queen Square and comprises a finely-detailed interwar neo-Tudor residential building (mansion block) originally built as a nurses' home, forming an important end stop to the vista along the Square. It comprises seven principal stories with additional basement and attic space, all visible in long views across the Square gardens and beyond. The building benefits from formally laid out lawns enclosed by cast-iron railings which contrasts with the hard stone pavements of the southern end of Queen Square. The building is located in the north-east corner of the Square with its main entrance fronting Guilford Street to the north.

The site is located within Sub Area 11 of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area and is identified as making a positive contribution to the character of the area. The site is also located within the Central London Area.

Planning History:

The application site has been the subject of a number of historical planning applications, none of which however, are relevant in the consideration of these proposals.

The Proposed Development:

The windows at Queen Court are 90 years old. Due to their age, many are in a state of disrepair with clear evidence of rusting, corrosion and broken furniture.

This application therefore seeks full planning permission for the refurbishment of façade windows across the building. The refurbishment will maintain the existing alignment and type of windows with no perceptible change from public vantage points, apart from the replacement of rogue windows that do not reflect the originally intended architecture. Further, the changes will significantly improve the thermal comfort of the building

For full detail of the proposed development please refer to the supporting Design & Access Statement.

Planning Policy:

National

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development which incorporates three specific strands – economic, environmental and social. The analysis of the proposed development will demonstrate that the scheme will accord with each of the three strands and the presumption in favour of sustainable development will therefore apply.

Local

For the purposes of this application, the adopted Development Plan for the London Borough of Camden comprises the London Plan (2016), the Local Plan (2017) and the Camden Planning Guidance Documents. The following policies are relevant to the consideration and determination of this application:

London Plan 2016

Policy 3.1 – Ensuring Equal Life Chances for all

Policy 3.4 – Optimising Housing Potential

Policy 3.14 – Existing Housing

Policy 5.1 – Climate Change Mitigation

Policy 7.4 – Local Character

Policy 7.6 – Architecture

Policy 7.8 – Heritage Assets

Camden Local Plan 2017

Policy A1 – Managing the Impact of Development

Policy D1 – Design

Policy D2 – Heritage

Camden Planning Guidance (CPG)

CPG Amenity

CPG Planning for Health and Wellbeing

CPG1 Design

CPG3 Sustainability

CPG6 Amenity

Planning Analysis:

Principle of development:

Law requires applications for planning permission to be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The site is in active residential use. Housing development is compatible with existing land uses in the surrounding area, and the site, for the purposes of planning law, is defined as previously developed land. In such locations, there are no development plan or national planning policies that restrict the alteration/refurbishment of the property in principle.

Impact on the character and appearance of the area:

Section 12 of the NPPF refers to well-designed places. Paragraph 127(c) states that *planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change*. Further, paragraph 130 states that *where the design of a development accords with clear expectations in plan policies, design should not be used by the decision-maker as a valid reason to object to development*.

Policy D1 of the local plan provides further detail on local requirements and, importantly, requires development to have particular regard to design and visual impact and to the context within which it is placed, and the contribution it makes to the landscape qualities of the area, guidance that is consolidated by Camden Planning Guidance 1 on Design.

The proposed works will improve the existing condition of the windows and will contribute to the streetscape of the surrounding areas by unifying the facades with coherent typologies.

This would benefit the character and appearance of the area and would therefore wholly accord with the principles of national and local planning policy.

Further detail on the design of the scheme is provided in the supporting Design & Access Statement.

Heritage impact:

Case law dictates that decision makers are required to give '*great weight*' to any harm to the significance of a heritage asset and how this should be applied is set out in section 16 of the NPPF.

The heritage value of the site is defined by its identification as a positive contributor in the context of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area and is otherwise surrounded by a number of listed buildings.

The Council's Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy (CAA) for Bloomsbury, sets out a notable consistency in the street pattern, spatial character and predominant building forms within the area, with specific reference to Queen Square as well as the building the subject of this application.

Given that the proposal will replicate existing architectural detailing but will significantly improve the thermal efficiency of the building, the level of harm generated is likely to be zero. In fact, for the reasons cited, the proposed development will create only positive impacts, maintaining the historical appearance of the building, and, by proxy, its long term retention.

Impact on residential amenity:

Policy A1 of the Local Plan seeks to ensure that standards of amenity are protected. This requires the highest standards of design to ensure the amenities of existing and future occupiers are safeguarded and this is echoed in guidance contained within the NPPF and the London Plan.

Further guidance is provided in CPG Amenity which sets specific standards of development. In this instance, the proposed development is merely related to the refurbishment of the facade and this does not present any negative impact on the amenity value of either the host building or that of the surrounding plots.

The application is further supported with the following plans and documents:

- Site Location Plan

- Existing and Proposed Plans and Elevations
- Design & Access Statement
- CIL Forms

I trust the submission is clear but if you require any points of clarification or have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Stuart Minty
Director
SM Planning