

PDTBC/PB/JL

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12 March 2020

Submitted via the Planning Portal: PP-08539963

Dear Elaine

**TEMPLAR HOUSE, 81-87 HIGH HOLBORN, LONDON WC1V 6NU
TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 (AS AMENDED)
APPLICATION FOR FULL PLANNING PERMISSION**

On behalf of our client, CER Investment SARL, please find enclosed an application for the refurbishment of Templar House, High Holborn, London WC1V 6NU. Full planning permission is sought for the following:

“Alterations to the building envelope, including replacement of all windows and the installation and reinstatement of rooflights”

This application has been submitted via the Planning Portal under ref. PP-08539963.

Site Description

Templar House (81-87 High Holborn and 24 to 27 Eagle Street) comprises a part-nine (plus plant area) part-seven storey building (plus basement) faced with Portland stone on the High Holborn elevation and a mixture of brick and stone on the Eagle Street elevation. The side elevations are not visible from the public realm. The existing building on the Site was constructed in 1959 by Richard & McLaughlin Architects and was an infill building following bomb damage during WWII.

The building is laid out as three blocks, one fronting onto High Holborn to the south, one onto Eagle Street to the north and one forming a connecting block in between. The latter is set in from the boundaries with the adjoining sites creating courtyard spaces to the west and east.

The building comprises offices on the first to 8th floors on the building fronting High Holborn and offices on the first to 7th floors of the building fronting Eagle Street, with plant equipment located at roof level. There is retail floorspace at ground floor level fronting onto High Holborn, which is provided across five retail units. Most of the occupiers have relocated to other premises and are now vacant. Vehicle access to the Site is from Eagle Street via a ramp into the basement which is mainly used as car parking

The Site is in the Bloomsbury Conservation Area. There are no statutorily listed buildings adjacent to the site however there are listed buildings in the wider area, including the Rosewood Hotel at 247-252 High Holborn (Grade II) approximately 20m south of the Site.

Client Objectives

CER Investments SARL purchased the Site on 28 September 2019. It is their intent for Uncommon to both own, occupy and manage the office and retail floorspace. Uncommon has created a portfolio of workspaces with a focus on providing supportive working environments, with an emphasis on design-led spaces and health & wellbeing. Their aim is to promote a healthier way of working in an environment that evokes creativity and productivity.

The building to be designed and finished to the highest standards, providing an excellent working environment for members and member organisations. Key focuses include building users' wellness and improve the buildings contribution to interest and vibrancy of the area. The scheme is intended to be a destination for the public and surrounding building users, positively contributing to the retail and food and beverage offer in the borough by taking a different approach to retail, and providing a high quality user experience.

Planning History

Following a review of the available planning history for the Site, the following are considered relevant:

- Planning permission was refused on 22 March 2018 (ref. 2015/4407/P) for the redevelopment of the Site, following the demolition of the existing 9 storey mixed use building to provide a 12 storey building onto High Holborn comprising 350 sqm of retail floorspace at ground floor level, 15,499 sqm of office floor space at basement to 11th floor levels and a 14 storey building fronting Eagle Street comprising a total of 52 residential units. The proposals included new and altered improvements to public realm, landscaping, parking, bin storage and associated works.
- Planning permission was approved on 24 June 2019 (ref. 2018/5903/P) for refurbishment of the existing building, including the installation of new and replacement rooflights at ground to enclose the existing voids following conversion of underground basement car park and removal of car park ramp to create additional employment floor space (B1 use), the erection of a single storey extension at ground floor level and 8th floor level, the installation of metal railings to create a roof terrace at 8th floor level, installation of additional air conditioning units in the existing plant enclosure and alterations and replacement of the louvred screen at 7th floor level fronting Eagle Street. The proposals also sought the enlargement of the office entrance to High Holborn elevation, which included alterations to the existing retail accommodation layout and shop frontages and alterations to the ground floor openings on the rear elevation fronting onto Eagle Street.

Our client is not seeking to implement any previous express planning permissions in relation to the Site.

Proposed Development and Application Format

A pre-application meeting was undertaken with the Council on 14 February 2020, to discuss the proposed works.

As agreed in this meeting, the works for which permission is sought will be submitted as three separate applications to align with the procurement and sequencing of the works. These are driven by a desire to bring the building back in to functional and operational use at the earliest opportunity.

This application therefore solely relates to the alterations to envelope works, not including those at ground floor and roof level which have been covered by other submissions.

Due to the nature of the alterations sought in each application, the submitted drawings and DAS may show elements which do not relate to this submission. For the avoidance of doubt, this application is seeking the following:

1. Alterations to the existing building envelope;
2. Replacement of all windows to the High Holborn and Eagle Street Elevations;
3. Installation of new and replacement rooflights at ground floor level; and
4. Reinstatement of the existing rooflight to the west flank of the link block.

Further information on the content of each application is in the Design and Access Statement (DAS) prepared by Cousins & Cousins Architects if needed.

The Development Plan

Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended) requires special attention to be given to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area when exercising planning functions.

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that “*where in making any determination under the planning Acts, regard is to be had to the development plan, the determination shall be made in accordance with the plan unless material consideration indicates otherwise*”. The development plan for Camden comprises:

- The London Plan (2016); and
- The Camden Local Plan (2017) and associated policies map, with alterations (2017).

The Site is subject to the following allocations/designations:

- Located in the Central Activities Zone (CAZ);
- Located in the Holborn Intensification Area;
- Located in the High Holborn/Kingsway Central London Frontage; and is
- Located in the Bloomsbury Conservation Area.

Local Plan Policies D1 (Design) and D2 (Heritage) are aimed at achieving the highest standard of design in all developments. Policy D1 (Design) requires development to be of the highest architectural and urban quality, which improves the function, appearance and character of the area, and Policy D2 (Heritage) states that the Council will preserve, and where appropriate, enhance Camden's heritage assets and their settings, including both conservation areas and listed buildings. These policies have been accounted for in the development of proposals and the assessments provided below.

Planning Policy Assessment

1. Alterations to the existing building envelope

The proposals comprise a number of alterations which seek to improve the building's appearance.

These include brickwork repairs, cowl removal, removal of superfluous balustrades and minor changes to the building envelope at ground and basement level. Of these alterations, only two alterations will be visible from the street namely; the removal of the Eagle Street façade balustrades, and the reinstatement of two windows at high level on the seventh and eighth floors of the High Holborn elevation.

To the Eagle Street elevation, the removal of the existing balustrades and their replacement with a latch way system will remove unsightly elements of detriment to the appearance of this façade. In accordance with Policies D1 (Design) and D2 (Heritage) this alteration not only improves the function and appearance of the Site, but enhances the contribution which the façade makes to the character and appearance of the conservation area.

The reinstatement of two high-level windows to the High Holborn façade, in a style that will match other windows in that façade, will improve and complete the elevation providing a consistency in appearance. Whilst the existing building is identified as making a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area, these works will further improve the appearance of the façade and should be viewed favourably.

The proposals also seek to illuminate the High Holborn façade in order to accentuate the quality of the elevation and improve the overall night time experience of the area. Further details are set out within the DAS.

We consider that in design terms, the proposals for this element are entirely in-keeping with the building appearance. The removal of unsightly elements and the improvements and remedial works improve the overall contribution which the building makes to the character and appearance of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area.

2. Replacement of all windows to the High Holborn and Eagle Street Elevations

To High Holborn, all existing sliding sash windows are to be replaced with white like-for-like replacements, and on Eagle Street and the Link Block, the windows will be replaced with like-for-like steel windows. To these blocks, replacement windows will be coloured to align more closely with the surrounding Portland stone detailing

All new windows are double glazed to meet current Part L requirements and improve acoustic and thermal performance.

This will provide a more consistent overall appearance to the building elevations, according with both Policy D1 (Design) and Policy D2 (Heritage). The alterations have an improvement on the character and appearance of the conservation area and should be viewed favourably therefore.

3. Installation of new and replacement rooflights at ground floor level

Policy E1 (Economic development) of the CLP seeks to secure a successful and inclusive economy in Camden by creating the conditions for economic growth and harnessing the benefits for local residents and businesses by supporting proposals for the intensification of employment sites and premises where these provide additional employment and other benefits in line with Policy E2 (Employment premises and sites).

Policy E2 (Employment premises and sites) prioritises the provision of employment premises and sites in the borough and protects premises or sites that are suitable for continued business use. Specifically in relation to intensifying the levels

and quality of employment floorspace provided, the policy outlines that the Council will view favorably premises which include floorspace suitable for start-ups, small and medium-sized enterprises.

As approved under ref. 2018/5903/P, the proposals seek to enclose the already partially covered basement car park and service area to provide additional office floorspace. These works, which would not be visible from outside of the site, would be expressed externally by the installation of new sloping rooflights to create a double height space. The provision of additional office floorspace should be welcomed, as it aligns with the desire to bring the building back in to maximum operational use as soon as possible.

At basement level, adjacent to the two-storey atria and the glazed canopies, the existing lightwell courtyard is extended and planted to provide a larger external space available for users of the building.

The appearance of the glazing system will be consistent across all canopies so they are understood as a single common intervention to the existing building. The proposals are for a bronze anodized patent glazing system, to differentiate from other existing windows in the building and compliment the wider design aesthetic of the internal spaces. The canopies provide large amounts of daylight to the space below improving the quality of the office accommodation within.

The alterations would not be visible from public views and would only be visible in very limited private views. They would therefore not harm the character or appearance of the building or have an adverse impact on the character or appearance of the conservation area. This element therefore aligns with the objectives of Policies D1 (Design), D2 (Heritage), E1 (Economic development) and E2 (Employment premises and sites).

4. Reinstatement of the existing rooflight to the west flank of the link block.

The proposals include reinstatement of the existing rooflights to the west flank of the link block, at first floor, over ground floor to provide natural daylight to the communal areas at ground floor level. An additional rooflight will be positioned in the area of new build envelope to match the existing rooflights in this location.

The works to improve the quality of the office accommodation, are not visible from public views. Given that the alterations would not be visible from any public vantage point it would not have an adverse impact on the character or appearance of the conservation area and is acceptable.

This alteration is therefore acceptable when assessed against the policies of the Camden Local Plan.

Conclusion

This supporting letter has been prepared in support of the planning application at Templar House, High Holborn, on behalf of our Client, CER Investment SARL which forms part of the wider package of works which seek to bring the currently vacant building back into operational use at the earliest opportunity.

The proposals benefit the occupancy of the building as a whole, would create additional footfall in the area and would help to maintain vibrancy and choice in this part of Holborn. The provision of additional office floorspace alongside necessary renovation and extension works have already been approved in principle under ref. 2018/5903/P and subsequently discussed at the pre-application meeting with Camden on 14 February 2019.

Many of the elements within this submission have been considered acceptable under the previous consent, and therefore given that from a legislative and planning policy perspective the proposals also accord with the Development Plan for the London Borough of Camden, the proposals should be viewed favourably.

Application Submission and Administrative Matters

To assist with the determination of this application, a suite of technical documents has been submitted in support of this application, and details of these documents are set out in the accompanying Schedule of Submitted Information (Document Ref. TH-1) and the Schedule of Application Drawings (Document Ref. TH-2), both prepared by Montagu Evans.

This application has been submitted via the Planning Portal, and the application fee of £2,772.00 has been calculated in accordance with The Town and Country Planning (Fees for Applications, Deemed Applications, Requests and Site Visits) (England) (Amendment) 2019.

Payment has been made to the Planning Portal directly.

Closing

We trust that the information submitted is sufficient and allows you to validate the application.

Should you require any further clarification, information or assistance please do not hesitate to contact James Leuenberger (james.leuenberger@montagu-evans.co.uk / 020 3962 6458) or Paul Burley (020 7866 8602/ paul.burley@montagu-evans.co.uk) at this office in the first instance.

Yours sincerely,

Montagu Evans

Montagu Evans LLP
Enc.