

4th June 2020

Development Management
Regeneration and Planning
London Borough of Camden
Town Hall
Judd Street
WC1H 9JE

Submitted via the Planning Portal

PP-08768764

Dear Sir or Madam

Town and Country Planning Act 1990 Spectrum House, 32-34 Gordon House Road, NW5 1LP Retrospective application for the installation of plant equipment.

Please find enclosed a planning application seeking retrospective planning permission for the installation of 32 air conditioning units to service the building at 32-34 Gordon House Road known as 'Spectrum House'.

The suggested description of development is below:

'Retrospective planning permission for the Installation of plant equipment'

The application comprises the following documents:

- Site Plan 035 prepared by Weston Allison Wright
- Location Plan 034 prepared by Weston Allison Wright
- Existing External A/C Units – Location Plan 4233/027 prepared by Weston Allison Wright
- Existing External A/C Units – Location Plan 4233/028 prepared by Weston Allison Wright
- Existing External A/C Units – Elevations 4233/029 prepared by Weston Allison Wright
- Existing External A/C Units – Elevations 4233/030 prepared by Weston Allison Wright
- Photographs of in-situ AC units (on drawings 4233/027 and 4233/028)
- Noise Impact Assessment prepared by Mayer Brown

Background

The applicant acquired Spectrum House between 2017 and 2018. As a result of an audit of the commercial units it has become apparent that a number of plant units were installed on the complex without the benefit of planning permission. These units were erected some years ago (c.2012) and from the Council's records have not caused a nuisance.

In order to regularise the situation to ensure that the commercial units within Spectrum House are adequately serviced, and thus the vacant units lettable, the plant is the subject of this planning application. As noted, this application is accompanied by a full acoustic assessment that has been undertaken to assess noise output and the ambient noise levels experienced at the site.

Planning Assessment

Design

The site is not located within a Conservation Area nor does it contain any listed buildings. A total of 32 air conditioning units have been installed on site. As demonstrated within the submitted documentation, the appearance of the front elevation of the building on site remains unchanged as a result of the development, retaining this feature along the street.

All units are sited away from the immediate boundaries with neighbouring buildings. Almost all of the units (including those on the roof) are not visible from a public vantage point. Whilst 4 are partially visible along 'elevation 2' and 'elevation 5', they are located a considerable distance from the main elevation and their presence is considered to be entirely unobtrusive. Owing to the even dispersion across the site, the units are not considered to be unduly prominent and retain the existing commercial character of the building.

The units located at roof level have either been positioned behind an existing roof parapet or set back from the main roof edge. This ensures that they have been largely screened and therefore do not appear as dominant features, preserving visual amenity.

Local Plan Policy D1 emphasises the need for high quality design in new development. Development should respect local context and character and carefully integrate building services equipment. The development retains the existing character of the building and its contribution to the streetscene along Gordon House Road. The units have been positioned so to minimise any detriment with regard to visual amenity. Accordingly, the development is considered to be in accordance with Policy D1.

In summary, owing to the location of the plant equipment installed, there is limited to no visibility from any public vantage points. Any visibility from nearby buildings will be limited and unobtrusive, ensuring visual amenity is protected.

Amenity

Local Plan Policy A1 states that the Council will seek to protect the quality of life of occupiers and neighbours. Local Plan Policy A4 confirms that the Council will only grant permission for noise generating development, including any plant and machinery, if it can be operated without causing harm to amenity.

The surrounding area is characterised by a combination of commercial and residential uses. Accordingly, the application is accompanied by a noise impact assessment that assesses the impact of the plant equipment on the surrounding environment.

5 noise sensitive receptors have been identified; these are identified as 'R1', 'R2', 'R3', 'R4' and 'R5' within the report and are shown in Figure 2.4. The report confirms that the noise emissions from the installed plant do not cause any material harm to the closest dwellings and are therefore considered to be compliant with national, city-wide and local planning policy.

The plant is operating without causing detriment to neighbouring amenity and is therefore considered to be in accordance with Local Plan Policies A1 and A4.

Conclusion

This application demonstrates that the installed plant has not resulted in the loss of any amenity to surrounding residents. The noise output is at a level that is not intrusive, nor does it cause a nuisance. This is evidenced by the absence of any complaints to the owners of Spectrum House or to the Council in the c.8-year duration of the existence of the units.

Furthermore, the units are not visible from the public vantage point and do not detract from the streetscene. They are entirely appropriate given the commercial nature of the building and the need for it to be adequately serviced so that it may be let to commercial tenants.

Closing

We trust that the submitted documentation is sufficient for validation and subsequent determination of this application, however, if you have any queries please contact Sophie King of this firm sking@danielwatney.co.uk 07850068313.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Daniel Watney". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping 'D' and a long, trailing 'y'.

Daniel Watney LLP
Planning and Development