


Delegated Report Members' briefing		Analysis sheet		Expiry Date:	14/10/2005
				Consultation Expiry Date:	25/09/2005
Officer			Application Number(s)		
Jenny Fisher			1. 2005/3610/P 2. 2005/3612/L		
Application Address			Drawing Numbers		
31 Southampton Row. London WC1B 5HJ					
PO 3/4	Area Team Signature	C&UD	Authorised Officer Signature		Date:
	<i>HHB 12/10</i>		<i>Tim Cowin</i>		<i>14/10/05</i>
Proposal(s)					
1. The installation of 20 air conditioning units and other air handling equipment at roof level in association with the refurbishment of the existing offices. 2. Works of refurbishment of existing offices at ground to fourth floor levels involving the removal of non-original walls, together with the installation of air conditioning units and other air handling equipment at roof level.					
Recommendation(s):		1. Grant planning permission with conditions. 2. Grant listed building consent with conditions.			
Application Type:		Full Planning Permission Listed building consent			

Conditions or Reasons for Refusal:	Refer to Draft Decision Notice					
Informatives:						
Consultations						
Adjoining Occupiers:	No. notified	00	No. of responses	00	No. of objections	00
Summary of consultation responses:						
<p>  AC/Local groups* comments: *Please Specify </p>	<p><u>English Heritage:</u> Authorise to determine</p> <p><u>Bloomsbury CAAC:</u> Again strongly object to this proposal which would be visible from Southampton Row and would thereby detract from the special interest and roofline of the listed building by reason of its height, size and location very close to the perimeter.</p> <p><u>Officer comment:</u> It is considered that in view of the position proposed for a/c indicated on plans and the fact that existing units cannot be viewed from the ground, proposed units are also unlikely to be seen, and as a consequence there would be no harm to the special historic character of the building or character and appearance of the conservation area.</p>					

Site Description

The application site comprises Grade II listed buildings that form a triangular site bounded by Southampton Row, Vernon Place and Sicilian Avenue, within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area. They were built 1906-1910 and designed by RJ Worley for the Bedford Estate. These are 5 storey redbrick buildings with faience dressings.

The buildings accommodate a mix of land uses. At ground floor level there is a shopping parade of predominantly retail units with some A3 uses. The 1st – 4th floors are in office use, currently vacant and undergoing refurbishment. The 5th floor is in residential use.

Relevant History

15/04/2005: 2005/0690 application for c/u 5th floor from residential use to office. REFUSED.

1. loss or res. floor space. 2. removal of second use from a mixed use bldg.

18/05/2005: 2005/0863/P 2005/0864/L planning and listed bldg. applications refused for a change of use of existing basement/ground floor café (Class A3) to form an electricity sub-station, disabled WC and storage areas in connection with the office (Class B1) use of no.31 Southampton Row.

Reasons

1. Failure to make a positive contribution to the setting of a listed bldg. and incongruous relationship with rest of parade.
2. Unacceptable shop front alteration.

26/07/2005: 2005/1675/P 2005/1676/L Refused

1. The installation of 20 a/c units and other air handling equipment at roof level, and the change of use of an existing basement/ground floor café (Class A3) (No. 33) to form an electricity sub-station.

2. Works of refurbishment of the existing office space at ground to fourth floor levels including the installation of 20 a/c units and other air handling equipment at roof level.

Reasons

1. c/u from A3 to sub-station fails to make a positive contribution to Conservation Area.
2. (i) Removal of walls 1 – 4th floors would harm special historic character of the building.
(ii) As reason for refusal of pl. application.

Relevant policies

EE2 (residential amenity); EN1 (environ. protection); EN5 (noise and vibration); EN6 (disturbance from machinery); EN13 (design of new develop); EN21 (alterations to existing bldgs); EN31 (conservation area); EN34 (shop fronts in conserv. areas); EN38 (preservation of listed bldgs.); EN39 (use of listed bldgs.); EN40 (restoration of listed bldgs.)
DS6 (standards)

Bloomsbury C.A.Statement

Assessment

The majority of works proposed are associated with the refurbishment of internal office floor space (first to fourth floors), currently in a poor decorative state and considered unlettable as a consequence. Works proposed include the refurbishment of the reception area, restoration of the external elevations and changes at roof level including new a/c units.

Internal works

The internal proposals are broadly acceptable due to there being few internal features of architectural value. However the following features have been identified as being of special architectural or historic interest and should be retained:

- The internal walls in each of the three corners of the building on floors 1-4
- The original skirting, where it survives
- The windows.

Walls: Internal walls on each of the three corners of the building are part of the original fabric of the building and would now be retained. Removal of these walls to create an open plan office on floors 1-4 was previously proposed but refused listed building consent because their removal was considered contrary to Policy EN38. The walls are of no particular architectural merit, however the spaces they enclose contribute to the special character of the building.

Skirting: All original skirting should be retained and if necessary removed and raised to the new floor level.

Windows: All original windows are to be retained, and repaired where necessary.

External works

In principle the repair, replacement, and cleaning of external elevations is considered acceptable. However, this should be done in-line with UDP Policy EN40. The replacement of non-traditional materials should be resisted where possible and replacement materials should exactly match existing in both colour and texture.

The schedule of works submitted demonstrates a high quality practical methodology. Should the applications be approved a condition is recommended to ensure that all works are carried out in accordance with the schedule.

Rooftop proposals

Currently there are a/c units on the rooftop; some would be removed others retained; an existing kitchen fan would be relocated.

New a/c units that would be installed would be placed towards the Southampton Row elevation, but set well back from the roof parapet. An existing a/c unit in a position closer towards the corner (Southampton Row/Vernon Place) of the building and other units set back from the Vernon Place elevation towards which there are greater opportunities of long views, cannot be seen from the ground. In relation to the height of the building, the width of Southampton Row does not allow for views of the roof.

It is considered that in view of the position proposed for a/c indicated on plans and the fact that existing units cannot be viewed from the ground, proposed units are also unlikely to be seen, and as a consequence there would be no harm to the special historic character of the building or character and appearance of the conservation area.

The alterations to the roof are considered acceptable; they would not be visible from the street and are not significantly overlooked from surrounding buildings.

Based on the results of the applicant's Acoustic Survey dated 4th March 2005, the applicant proposes the installation of plant that would meet the Council's noise and vibration standards. If planning application approved standard conditions are recommended.