

28/10/20

Application: Demolition of 247 Tottenham Court Road, 3 Bayley Street, 1 Morwell Street, 2-3 Morwell Street and 4 Morwell Street and the erection of a mixed-use office led development comprising ground plus five-storey building for office (Class B1) use, flexible uses at ground and basement (Class A1/A2/A3/B1/D1/D2), residential (Class C3) use, basement excavation, provision of roof terraces, roof level plant equipment and enclosures, cycle parking, public realm and other associated works.

LPA ID: 2020/3583/P

Address: 247 Tottenham Court Road, Bloomsbury, London (site includes this address plus Bayley Street, 1 Morwell Street, 2-3 Morwell Street and 4 Morwell Street), W1T 7QX

Dear Laura Hazelton,

Thank you for informing the Georgian Group of the above application for Planning Permission. On the basis of the information available to date, we offer the following advice to assist your authority in determining this application.

Significance of Asset and Surrounding Area

The subject site sits on the boundary of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area and within the setting of Bedford Square. Within this letter, it is only those buildings that date within The Georgian Group's remit (1700-1840) which I will discuss - this does not mean that any buildings I do not describe will not be harmed by the proposed development.

Bedford Square was built between 1776 and 1780 by W Scott and R Grews to the designs of either Thomas Leverton or Robert Palmer. The central garden is designated at grade II* and surrounded by four grade I listed terraces giving the square an architectural uniformity which set the style for garden squares in London through the late 18th century and early 19th century. The Bloomsbury Conservation Area Appraisal states that 'Bedford Square is one of the most significant and complete examples of a Georgian Square in London'.



Proposal

The applicant intends to demolish the buildings on the site and replace them with a mixed-use office led development comprising a six-storey building. A full description of the proposed works can be found at the head of this letter.

The Georgian Group Advice

The Group has concerns over the impact the new development will have on the setting of the western terrace of Bedford Square, along with views from the northern terrace of the square. The new building will project further forward on Morwell Street than the existing building making it more visible from within the square. The prominence of the new building can be seen within the applicants Visual Impact Assessment in views 5,6 and 7 where the massing combined with the height of the new building would harm the setting of the western terrace.

Recommendation

The Georgian Group objects to the application in its current form. The issue over the massing and height of the proposed development directly harms the setting of the heritage assets referred to within the previous sections.

Your local authority should be minded to consider paragraph 193 of the National Planning Policy Framework. Within this paragraph, it states 'when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be)'. The surrounding terraces of Bedford Square are grade I designated heritage assets.

Furthermore, as far as the settings of and inter-relationship between associated heritages assets are concerned, the following advice from the section of the PPG accompanying the NPPF entitled 'What is the setting of a heritage asset and how can it be taken into account?' is directly relevant: 'The extent and importance of setting is often expressed by reference to the visual relationship between the asset and the proposed development and associated visual/physical considerations. Although views of or from an asset will play an important part in the assessment of impacts on setting, the way in which we experience an asset in its setting is also influenced by other environmental factors such as noise, dust, smell and vibration from other land uses in the vicinity, and by our



understanding of the historic relationship between places. For example, buildings that are in close proximity but are not visible from each other may have a historic or aesthetic connection that amplifies the experience of the significance of each'.

In determining this application you should bear in mind the statutory duty of section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to have special regard to the desirability of preserving listed buildings or their setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which they possess.

Your Authority should take these representations into account in determining the application. If there are any material changes to the proposals, or you would like further advice, please contact us.

Yours sincerely,

Edward Waller (Conservation Adviser for South East England and London)

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