

THIS IS A NOTE



TO

Camden Planning Department

CC

FROM

Montagu Evans - Central London & Heritage
Planning

DATE

12 May 2022

SUBJECT

1 & 1A Montague Street – Change of Use Application

Response to LB Camden comments received 19 April 2022

- **Was the AA offered the option to return to the site at 247 Tottenham Court Road when the new building is completed? The officer's committee report doesn't appear to mention the fact that part of the AA teaching space would be lost as a result of the redevelopment scheme and they would need to seek a new building to accommodate the space that they lost.**

The AA had already vacated the building at the time the application for redevelopment was considered at the planning stage. The officer's report deals with this at para 36 and highlights that the AA had vacated and consolidated their teaching spaces in Bedford Square, having identified the space at 247 Tottenham Court Road as not fit for purpose.

The new floorspace provided by the redevelopment at 247 Tottenham Court Road does not meet the AA's requirements and would not be a feasible option for the institution.

- **You mentioned that 16 other properties had been viewed by the AA management as part of the search for a new building. Can you provide a bit more detail about the properties that were viewed? Were any buildings that are occupied by language schools viewed and considered? It would be helpful to have a table identifying the properties that were viewed, their use and why they were discounted as a potential option for consideration.**

The AA were provided with a range of properties to view by their agents at Montagu Evans. These were all located around the Bloomsbury, Fitzrovia, St Giles and Holborn areas. Properties that were viewed included premises on Garwick Street, High Holborn, Alfred Place, Great Russell Street and Tottenham Court Road.

The buildings were all in office use and provided a variety of different floorspace types and characters of building, some listed and some modern, unlisted accommodation.

The other sites all in Camden were shortlisted, toured, and considered by the AA senior management team. These properties were discounted as they did not meet the specific needs of the AA in terms of providing specific sizes and types of teaching rooms, did not provide adequate archive spaces, or were at a price point that was unsustainable for the institution to consider leasing.

Other properties needed to be shared with other tenants, which would not be appropriate on safety and educational grounds, and would prevent the AA from making changes to the building where necessary.

Montague Street was the clear preferred property given the character and disposition of the spaces mirrored the AA premises in Bedford Square. The continuity of the student experience and the expectations associated with the profile of the AA and teaching style were an important consideration and the Montague Street property met these requirements, as well as the spatial qualities and status of the listed building. Montague Street's proximity to the AA and links to a cultural institution (British Museum) also made it the top choice.

The Building lends itself to the type of studio-based and tutorial teaching that will be undertaken. This is a core part of how the School operates and is essential to architectural training. The AA intend to occupy the Building in a hybrid manner, providing office spaces for staff and teaching and learning spaces for students. At the heart of its academic provision is studio-based instruction which is organised twice weekly along with a sequence of seminars, lectures, and workshops which are organised around the studios.

This approach to teaching is well suited to the layout of the Building at numbers 1 and 1a. More traditional aspects of design such as model building will remain in Bedford Square premises where the wood, metal and digital prototyping workshops are located. Importantly, the layout affords the AA the opportunity to organise collaborative learning spaces where two studio rooms could link to a third shared space. The location of kitchenettes, toilets, and reception spaces also were considered ideal for the AA's purposes. Considerations of natural light and rear garden access further solidified the AA's preference around this property. The use of 1 and 1a Montague Street is therefore wholly necessary to the teaching approach taken by the AA.

- **Please confirm the amount and location of the cycle parking facilities**

The capacity and access to the existing bike storeroom in basement (for 30 bikes) is to be maintained. Most students and staff will continue to keep their bikes at Bedford Square as usual and walk to Montague Street from the principal premises.

As was clear from site, the cycle spaces are to be provided in the lightwell to the front of the property, out of site from the street and away from the historic railings.