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| Delegated Report | | Analysis sheet | Expiry Date: | 20/01/2022 |
| | | N/A / attached | Consultation Expiry Date: | 06/02/2021 |
| Officer | | | Application Number(s) | |
| Miriam Baptist | | | 2021/5779/P | |
| Application Address | | | Drawing Numbers | |
| St Andrews House, Flat 3 252 Gray's Inn Road London WC1X 8JT | | | Refer to Draft Decision Notice | |
| PO 3/4 | Area Team Signature | C&UD | Authorised Officer Signature | |
| | | | | |
| Proposal(s) | | | | |
| Use of flat roof as terrace, erect boundary railings, install sliding hatch access door, and associated alterations including glass flooring. | | | | |
| Recommendation(s): | Refuse Planning Permission | | | |
| Application Type: | Full Planning Permission | | | |

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|------------------------------------|---|----|------------------|----|-------------------|----|
| 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 |
| | | | No. electronic | 00 | | |
| Summary of consultation responses: | <p>Site Notices were displayed on 15/01/2021 expiring on the 12/02/2022 in the following locations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Outside 252 Grays Inn Road - In St Andrew's Gardens <p>A Press Advert was published on and 13/01/2021 and expired on 16/01/2022.</p> <p>No objections or comments were received from adjoining occupiers</p> | | | | | |
| Camden Square CAAC comments: | <p>An objection was received from Bloomsbury CAAC on the following grounds:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The existing building is highly visible from the public realm (on Gray's Inn Road, Wren Street and from within St Andrews' Gardens where it occupies a prominent position on the perimeter). The site is opposite grade II listed 165 Gray's Inn Road, and neighbours Sphinx House and 252a Gray's Inn Road which are both positive contributors to the conservation area. The application site is considered banal and architecturally poor, a mix of post-modern and Georgian pastiche. One positive feature is that it creates a step down from the taller Sphinx House and 2 storey 252a Gray's Inn Road. The concern is that the proposal will be an unfortunate addition drawing more attention to the property and making it look worse than it already does. • Concern regarding potential overlooking and noise nuisance to private garden of neighboring no 252a. Overlooking is believed to be increased, not only from the rear façade of no 252 (where there are existing windows), but also from the right façade of the subject property where there are no existing windows, therefore overlooking potential is materially different. <p><i>Officer's response:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See section 3 below • See section 4 below | | | | | |

Site Description

The site is a three-storey plus mansard level building within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area. It is not a listed building. The application building stands opposite Grade II listed building 185 Gray's Inn Road.

Relevant History

N/A

Relevant policies

National Planning Policy Framework 2021

London Plan 2021

Camden Local Plan 2017

Policy A1 – Managing the impact of development

Policy A4 – Noise and vibration

Policy D1 – Design

Policy D2 – Heritage

Camden Planning Guidance

Design (2021)

Amenity (2021)

Bloomsbury Conservation Area Statement (2011)

Assessment

1 Proposal

1.1. Planning permission is sought for alterations at roof level: the use of the flat roof as a terrace, the associated erection of boundary railings, a sliding hatch access door, and glass flooring. The roof terrace would provide private amenity space for occupants of the upper flat at no 252 Gray's Inn Road.

2 Assessment

2.1 The main considerations in relation to this proposal are:

- Design and Heritage (the of impact of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host building and wider Bloomsbury Conservation Area);
- Amenity (the impact of the proposal on the amenity of adjoining occupiers);

3 Design and Heritage

3.1 The application site is within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area, wherein the Council has a statutory duty, under section 72 of The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended), to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the conservation area.

3.2 The host building stands between Sphinx House (no 252b) and no 252a Gray's Inn Road, both of which are identified in the Bloomsbury Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy as positive contributors to the character and appearance of the conservation area. On the opposite side of the road stands Grade II listed building, 165 Gray's Inn Road. The Council has a statutory duty to have special regard to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses, under sections 16 and 66 of The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act) 1990 (as amended).

3.3 Policy D1 of the Local Plan requires proposals to consider the character, setting, context and the form and scale of neighbouring buildings; and the character and proportions of the existing

building. Through Policy D2, the Council will seek to preserve and, where appropriate, enhance Camden's conservation areas.

- 3.4 In the context of surrounding buildings, the architecture of no 252 is considered to detract from its neighbours and therefore any proposal which may accentuate its presence or make it more conspicuous on the streetscene is to be discouraged. The additional height given by a roof level balustrade would make the building more prominent, particularly given that roof terraces are not a usual or established feature on this stretch of Gray's Inn Road.
- 3.5 A positive feature of the building is that within the group of buildings of which it is part the building steps down, bringing welcome variation of roof level and contributing to the height transition between Sphinx House and number 252a. A balustrade would add mass and visual clutter to the top of the building thereby reducing the distinct step down in height between itself and Sphinx House. This would not be considered a positive alteration to the group of buildings of which it is a part, nor would this loss of visual step down be considered to enhance or preserve the appearance of the conservation area.
- 3.6 The negative impacts of this proposal highlighted are exacerbated by the high visibility of the host building within the public realm. The building is seen from Gray's Inn Road, along Wren Street and from within St Andrews' Gardens where it occupies a prominent position on the perimeter. Due to the long views of the host building from various points on both Gray's Inn Road and Wren Street and from within St George's Gardens, a set back of the roof terrace/balustrade from the edge of the roof was not considered a revision that would mitigate the negative impact of the scheme, it would still be clearly visible at roof level.
- 3.7 Paragraph 202 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) guides that *"Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use"*.
- 3.8 The proposals are considered to cause 'less than substantial' harm to the character and appearance of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area and the Council considers that the public benefits of the scheme are limited (i.e. the development would only benefit the applicant). Therefore the public benefits do not outweigh the harm that would be caused and the application is recommended for refusal on this basis.

4 Amenity

- 4.1 Policy A1 of the Local Plan seek to protect the amenity of Camden's residents by ensuring the impact of development is fully considered and would not harm the amenity of neighbouring residents. This includes privacy, outlook, noise, daylight and sunlight. Policy A4 of the Local Plan seeks to ensure that noise and vibration is controlled and managed.
- 4.2 No 252 Gray's Inn Road is several storeys higher than neighbouring no 252a and has a very steep mansard roof structure. Although there would be views over the neighbouring garden of no 252a, there would be no direct views into private habitable rooms and there is therefore no material loss of privacy.
- 4.3 Given the context of the site, potential noise disturbance caused by the proposed terrace to neighbouring properties is not considered to be over and above existing possible noise disturbance from St Andrew's Gardens directly to the rear which operates as a public park. The proposal is therefore considered to be acceptable in this respect.

5 Conclusion

- 5.1 The proposal is for the addition of a roof terrace on an existing flat roof and associated works,

visible from the public realm within a conservation area. The development would have a negative impact on design and heritage therefore is contrary to policies D1 and D2 of Camden's Local Plan 2017.

6 Recommendation

6.1 Refuse planning permission.