

<b>Delegated Report</b>		<b>Analysis sheet</b>	<b>Expiry Date:</b>	<b>02/11/2021</b>
		N/A / attached	<b>Consultation Expiry Date:</b>	26/12/2021
<b>Officer</b>			<b>Application Number(s)</b>	
Kristina Smith			2021/4312/P	
<b>Application Address</b>			<b>Drawing Numbers</b>	
26 Argyle Square London WC1H 8AP			<i>Refer to Draft Decision Notice</i>	
<b>PO 3/4</b>	<b>Area Team Signature</b>	<b>C&amp;UD</b>	<b>Authorised Officer Signature</b>	
<b>Proposal(s)</b>				
Conversion of lower ground and ground floor levels of property from 2 to 4 residential units.				
<b>Recommendation(s):</b>	Refuse planning permission			
<b>Application Type:</b>	Full Planning Permission			

Conditions or Reasons for Refusal:	<b>Refer to Draft Decision Notice</b>			
Informatives:				
<b>Consultations</b>				
Adjoining Occupiers:	No. of responses	<b>00</b>	No. of objections	<b>00</b>
Summary of consultation responses:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A site notice was displayed between 26/11/2021 and 20/12/2021</li> <li>• A press advert was published on 02/12/2021</li> </ul> <p>No objections were received</p>			
Bloomsbury CAAC	<p>The Bloomsbury CAAC provided the following objection:</p> <p><i>We would like to object to the proposal on the basis that splitting up the two maisonette flats into four units would create sub-standard accommodation that would be detrimental to the conservation area.</i></p> <p><i>The two new flats on the lower ground floor will have limited daylight, which we believe would be inadequate. The existing layout has living space on the ground floor which has a large amount of natural light which counteracts the poor amount in the bedrooms below. The Camden Local Plan states in Policy D1 Design, that the Council will require that development 'provides a high standard of accommodation', the proposal goes against this policy.</i></p>			

## Site Description

The site is a two storey plus basement built as an extension to no.26A Argyle Square, a Grade II mid-19th-century townhouse.

The site is situated in the Bloomsbury Conservation Area.

## Relevant History

**2014/2594/P** - Change of use and works of conversion from an art gallery and commercial space (D1 and B1) and 2 residential units into 5 residential units (3 x 2 bed, 2 x 3 bed) including roof extension and roof terrace at rear 2nd floor level, new entrance portico and windows. **Granted Subject to a Section 106 Legal Agreement 24/11/2014**

**2006/5303/P** - Change of use and works of conversion of the rear of the building from office use (Class B1) / exhibition use (Class D1) to residential use (Class C3) comprising 3x units (1 x 1-bed and 1 x 2-bed self-contained flats, and 1 x 1-bed studio flat) and retention of 111sq.m of Class B1/D1 space. - **Granted Subject to a Section 106 Legal Agreement 06/08/2007**

**2005/3077/P** - Conversion into 2 self contained units comprising basement studio flat and 3-bedroom unit on upper floors with associated internal and external alterations. **Granted 30/09/2005**

## Relevant policies

### National Planning Policy Framework 2021

### London Plan 2021

### Camden Local Plan 2017

A1 Managing the impact of development

H1 Maximising housing supply

H6 Housing choice and mix

H7 Large and small homes

D1 Design

D2 Heritage

T1 Prioritising walking, cycling and public transport

T2 Parking and car-free development

DM1 Monitoring

### Camden Planning Guidance

CPG Design 2021

CPG Amenity 2021

CPG Housing 2021

CPG Transport 2021

CPG Developer's contributions 2019

### Bloomsbury Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy (2011)

## Assessment

### 1 Proposal

1.1 The application seeks planning permission for the conversion of 2 residential units (1x2-bed, 1x3-bed) to 4 residential units (3x1-bed, 1xstudio).

1.2 There are no external changes proposed; only works of internal reconfiguration.

### 2 Assessment

2.1 The main considerations in the determination of the application are:

- Land use
- Housing
- Amenity of neighbouring occupiers
- Transport considerations

### 3 Land use

3.1 Self-contained housing is regarded as the priority land-use of the Camden Local Plan and Policy H1 states that the Council will make housing its top priority when considering the future of unused and underused land and buildings. The proposal would increase the floorspace slightly via the extension but this is a relatively minor uplift. The reconfiguration of the building would effectively result in the loss of a 2-bed and a 3-bed unit and see them replaced with 3 x 1-beds and a studio unit.

3.2 Policy H7 seeks to provide a range of unit sizes to meet demand across the borough. The policy text reads,

*'We will seek to ensure that all housing development, including conversion of existing homes and non-residential properties:*

- a.) Contributes to meeting the priorities set out in the Dwelling Size Priorities Table; and*
- b.) Includes a mix of large and small homes'*

3.3 The Dwelling Size Priorities Table regards 2 and 3 bed units as high priority whilst 1-bed and studios are identified as lower priority. The proposal would therefore lose two high priority units and gain four lower priority units. The new mix would not comply with either of the policy criteria as it would not include any higher priority units nor would it comprise a mix of large and small homes. It is therefore contrary to policy H7 and failure to provide a mix of homes of different sizes will constitute a reason for refusal.

### 4 Housing

#### *Quality of residential accommodation*

4.1 CPG Housing requires development to provide high quality housing that meets space standards, provides secure, well-lit accommodation that has well-designed layouts and rooms. All habitable rooms should have access to natural daylight and the strong preference is for dual aspect units.

4.2 In this instance, all units meet minimum space standards. However, Flats 1 and 2 at lower ground floor level would have very poor outlook and daylight levels. As seen during a site visit, the only windows serving the main living spaces are high level and substantially recessed. No sky is visible from within the rooms as externally these windows are at pavement level with the ground floor windows above overhanging the pavement (see image below). It is accepted that this is the

existing condition for bedrooms but these are not the main living spaces and the units are arranged over two floors, allowing them to have access to good daylight and outlook from some rooms. This is regarded as poor quality residential accommodation and will constitute a reason for refusal.



## 5 Impact on the amenity of surrounding occupiers

5.1 As there are no external works, there are no amenity implications for surrounding occupiers.

## 6 Transport Considerations

6.1 In line with Policy T1 of the Local Plan, the Council expect cycle parking at new developments to be provided in accordance with the standards set out within the London Plan (1 space for 1 studio and 1b1p units). For the proposed mix, 4 spaces would be required but the proposals do not show these incorporated into the design nor does there appear to be scope to include them within the site boundary. Were the application to be supported, a financial contribution to on-street provision would have been sought and secured by s106 legal agreement. The absence of such an agreement at this stage is considered to justify a reason for refusal.

6.2 Policy T2 requires all redevelopment schemes to be car-free in order to reduce air pollution and congestion and improve the attractiveness of an area for local walking and cycling. In this instance that would mean all 4 reconfigured units should be car free. In the absence of a finalised legal agreement being in place at the time of determination, the lack of such agreement shall constitute a reason for refusal.

## 7 Recommendation

**7.1** Refuse Planning Permission on the following grounds:

- The proposed development would fail to secure a range of homes of different sizes that will contribute to the creation of mixed, inclusive and sustainable communities, contrary to policy H7 of the Camden Local Plan 2017.
- The proposed reconfiguration would result in two lower ground floor units with compromised

levels of daylight and outlook to the detriment of future occupiers, contrary to policies D1 (Design) and H6 (Housing choice) of the London Borough of Camden Local Plan 2017.

- The proposed development, in the absence of a legal agreement to secure a contribution to cycle parking, would fail to promote cycling as a sustainable transport choice, contrary to policy T1 (Prioritising walking, cycling and public transport) of the Camden Local Plan 2017.
- The proposed development, in the absence of a legal agreement to secure car-free housing, would be likely to contribute unacceptably to parking stress and congestion in the surrounding area and fail to promote healthy or sustainable transport choices, contrary to policy T2 (Parking and car-free development) of the Camden Local Plan 2017.