

<b>Delegated Report</b>		<b>Analysis sheet</b>		<b>Expiry Date:</b>		07/09/2022	
		N/A		<b>Consultation Expiry Date:</b>		26/09/2022	
<b>Officer</b>				<b>Application Number(s)</b>			
Miriam Baptist				2022/2989/P			
<b>Application Address</b>				<b>Drawing Numbers</b>			
Holiday Inn Bloomsbury Coram Street London WC1N 1HT				See decision notice			
<b>PO 3/4</b>		<b>Area Team Signature</b>		<b>C&amp;UD</b>		<b>Authorised Officer Signature</b>	
<b>Proposal(s)</b>							
Erection of new boundary enclosure to existing refuse yard comprising a raised brick wall and a series of mesh metal panels plus new metal screen gates to three existing vehicular access points.							
<b>Recommendation(s):</b>		Refuse Planning Permission					
<b>Application Types:</b>		Full Planning Permission					
<b>Conditions or Reasons for Refusal:</b>		Refer to Decision Notice					
<b>Informatives:</b>							
<b>Consultations</b>							
<b>Adjoining Occupiers:</b>		No. notified	00	No. of responses	00	No. of objections	00
<b>Summary of consultation responses:</b>		Site notices were displayed outside 1-15 Bernard Mansions, 7-11 Herbrand Street and 6 Coram Street from 02/09/2022 (expiring 26/09/2022).  No objections or comments were received from adjoining occupiers.					
<b>CAAC/ Local Group comments:</b>		No responses from any local groups were received.					

## Site Description

The application site consists of a large 6 storey horseshoe shaped building currently in hotel use (Class C1). The site's principal elevation faces Coram Street. The site is not listed and is not located within a conservation area; however it is surrounded by the Bloomsbury Conservation Area on three sides. The rear refuse yard subject of this application lies directly opposite a Grade II Listed modernist car park within the conservation area.

## Relevant Planning History

No relevant planning history.

## Relevant policies

### The National Planning Policy Framework 2021

### The London Plan 2021

### Camden Local Plan 2017

- A1 Managing the impact of development
- D1 Design
- D2 Heritage

### Supplementary Guidance - Camden Planning Guidance

- Design (2021) – **Sections 3 (Heritage), 8 (Storage and collection of recycling and waste)**

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

- Section 2 (Design Excellence)
- Section 3 (Heritage)
- Section 4 (Landscape and Public Realm)
- Section 5 (Management of Change)

## Assessment

### 1 Proposed Development

1.1 Planning permission is sought for the following:

- Raising existing refuse yard brick wall, installation of new metal screen gates to three existing vehicles access points and inserting a series of mesh metal panels to screen refuse yard.

### 2 Assessment

2.1 The principal consideration in the determination of this application relates to:

- Design and heritage (The impact of the proposal to the special character and appearance of the adjacent Grade II Listed Buildings and the adjacent Bloomsbury Conservation Area);
- Neighbouring residential amenity

### 3 Design and Heritage

3.1 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). The Council has a statutory duty to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving

or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area, in accordance with Section 72 of The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended).

3.2 Local Plan policies D1 (Design) and D2 (Heritage) are aimed at achieving the highest standard of design in all developments. Policy D1 requires development to be of the highest architectural and urban design quality, which improves the function, appearance and character of the area; and Policy D2 states that the Council will preserve, and where appropriate, enhance Camden's rich and diverse heritage assets and their settings, including conservation areas and listed buildings.

3.3 The CPG Design requires development to consider: *context, height, accessibility, orientation, scale and massing, siting, functionality and layout, detailing and materials*. This guidance states these considerations apply to structures such as substations, refuse or cycle storage, outdoor spaces, landscaping and access points.

3.4 The CPG states that '*Camden has a rich architectural heritage and we have a responsibility to preserve, and where possible, enhance these areas and buildings*'. The CPG goes on to state the following in relation to materials:

*Materials should form an integral part of the design process and should:*

- *Be contextual – the texture, colour, pattern and patina of materials can influence the impact and experience of buildings for users and the wider townscape. The quality of a well-designed building can easily be reduced by the use of poor quality or an unsympathetic palette of materials. Decisions on the materials used in a development scheme should be informed by those used in the local area.*
- *Respond to existing heritage assets and features by relating to the character and appearance of the area, particularly in conservation areas or within the setting of listed buildings.*

3.5 In regards to 'Storage and collection of recycling and waste' the CPG encourages new and refurbished developments to be '*sensitively designed and located in relation to the local environment especially in conservation areas and listed buildings*'. This is considered to be relevant and applicable as the refuse area is essentially being refurbished. The guidance also states that '*Measures should be taken to ensure that the visual impact of waste storage is minimised. Particular considerations should be given for listed buildings and buildings in a conservation area.*'

3.6 Section 5 of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy states that: '*Building frontages, roads, pavements and the squares are all important elements of the public realm and the cumulative impact of small scale additions can have an overall detrimental impact on the character of the area. Such additions can include: Loss of frontage railings, loss of original/interesting streetscape elements, unsympathetic surfacing materials, Clutter of street furniture, Visual clutter from excessive signage and flags, Refuse and recycling storage.*'

3.7 Section 4 of the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy highlights that the '*detailed design of boundary treatments and spaces within the site particularly where they are visible to the public domain*' should '*preserve and enhance local character*', and that '*Entrances and adjoining areas of buildings are often spaces which require the integration of a number of competing needs such as the provision of bins, cycle storage, meters and inspection boxes and external lighting. These elements should be constructed with materials sympathetic to the site and surroundings. Applicants can minimise the visual impact of storage areas by careful siting and incorporating planters to screen developments and incorporating green roofs as part of their structure.*'

### The Proposal

3.8 The proposal is essentially for changes to the boundary of the open refuse yard in order to completely screen it as it currently has a somewhat messy appearance comprising various bins,

paladins, containers and compactors. At present, there is a low brick wall, ranging in height from 0.9m to 1.3m. The proposal seeks to add an additional 2.2m height to this boundary, which means that overall the wall would be up to 3.5m high from street level. It will be punctuated with metal grille panels and there would be new metal gates to vehicle entrances.

- 3.9 The existing boundary treatment is a low brick wall which is considered human in scale and unimposing and gives a sense of openness to the street which contributes positively to the public realm and the setting of the adjacent listed building. The increased height and complete enclosure of the yard by a solid wall with gates and mesh panels will remove this open character and effectively give the appearance of one large single storey side extension to the hotel covering the yard. The increased height and bulk created by a solid enclosure is considered unacceptable in principle here. The significant increase in wall height would harm the open character of the street and create a defensive tall solid boundary. This is considered harmful to both the surrounding streetscape, the conservation area opposite and the Grade II Listed building directly opposite which spans a 60m length of the street.
- 3.10 The detailed design is also considered unacceptable. The large metal panels offer articulation on an otherwise blank wall but are considered inappropriate in detail and a more traditional design with railings of a more permeable nature would be preferred. The proposed metal panels would be akin to a close weave mesh or grille and, although usually these materials may be considered appropriate for a back-of-house area, the boundary has a direct interface with the public realm, facing both the conservation area and listed building, and thus a more sympathetic approach should be used.
- 3.11 The applicant has highlighted that the permeated panels are also valuable for ventilation purposes; however the refuse area is not covered and so will benefit from adequate natural ventilation. In terms of justifying the need for ventilation, the applicant has also communicated that a roof is likely to be added at a later date to shield the refuse storage area from the view of hotel rooms above; this adds support to the argument above that the high boundary enclosure resembles a side extension and could effectively become one if a roof is added later.
- 3.12 It is acknowledged that there is a desire to screen the visual clutter created by bins in this yard. However, instead of the erection of one solid tall boundary around it, it could be designed in a more modulated and bespoke manner; thus it is suggested that perhaps the low brick wall could be raised slightly to hide the row of bins alongside and higher gates/railings could be installed along certain sections of the boundary or individual screens and enclosures used to mask specific refuse storage units or pieces of equipment. This would be the preferred approach in this location in order to preserve the open nature of the street.
- 3.13 Overall the proposed boundary alteration is considered to create an excessively high solid and bulky structure which would not preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the host property, the streetscape, adjacent Bloomsbury Conservation Area or setting of the adjacent Grade II Listed building; rather it is considered a defensive and imposing boundary of detrimental effect. The proposed development would not be acceptable from a design and heritage perspective.
- 3.14 Local Plan policy D2, consistent with Section 16 (Conserving and enhancing the historic environment) of the NPPF 2019 which seeks to preserve and enhance heritage assets, states that the Council will not permit the loss of or substantial harm to a designated heritage asset, including conservation areas and the setting of listed buildings, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss. The Council will not permit development that results in harm that is 'less than substantial' to the significance of a designated heritage asset unless the public benefits of the proposal convincingly outweigh that harm.

3.15 Given the assessment outlined above, it is considered that the proposals would result in 'less than substantial' harm to the character and appearance of the adjacent Conservation Area and to the setting of the Grade II Listed building opposite. The proposed scheme would not provide any public benefit. Thus the harm caused as a result of the development outweighs this lack of public benefit, so that the proposal is considered to be contrary to Section 16 of the NPPF which seeks to preserve heritage assets.

3.16 The development is considered to be inappropriate in terms of design and bulk which is unsympathetic to the adjacent conservation area and the adjacent Grade II Listed building. For these reasons it is not considered to comply with design guidance in the Council's Design CPG, nor to comply with Local Plan policies D1 and D2.

#### **4 Residential Amenity**

4.1 Policy A1 of the Local Plan seeks to protect the quality of life of occupiers and neighbours. The policy notes that the factors to consider include: visual privacy and outlook; sunlight, daylight and overshadowing; artificial lighting levels; impacts of the construction phase; and noise and vibration.

4.2 Overall, the proposal is not considered to give rise to any adverse impacts on neighbouring residential amenity in terms of daylight, sunlight, outlook or privacy.

#### **5 Conclusion**

5.1 The proposed boundary enclosure, by reason of its bulk, height, design and location, is considered to be unsympathetic, incongruous and harmful to the character and appearance of the streetscape and the adjacent Bloomsbury Conservation Area and to the setting of adjacent Grade II Listed building, contrary to Policies D1 (Design) and D2 (Heritage) of the Camden Local Plan 2017.

#### **6 Recommendations**

6.1 Refuse Planning Permission