CITY OF WESTMINSTER				
PLANNING	Date	Classification		
APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE	10 April 2017	For General Rele	ase	
Report of		Ward(s) involved		
Director of Planning		West End		
Subject of Report	Lion House, 2 Red Lion Yard, London, W1J 5JR			
Proposal	Internal reconfiguration of the existing building to include the amalgamation of the existing two flats at first floor level to create a family sized dwelling (Class C3), and conversion of existing boiler room for use as a bin store for all of the flats and for the storage of 4 bicycles.			
Agent	Savills			
On behalf of	House Owners Investments			
Registered Number	16/10955/FULL	Date amended/	16 November	
Date Application Received	16 November 2016	completed	16 November 2016	
Historic Building Grade	Unlisted			
Conservation Area	Mayfair			

1. **RECOMMENDATION**

Grant conditional permission

2. SUMMARY

The application relates to Lion House, a four storey residential property located in Red Lion Yard accessed from Waverton Street. The proposals involve internal reconfiguration and the amalgamation of two 1-bed flats at first floor level to create a family sized unit. The key issue is:

• The acceptability of the loss of one residential unit.

The amalgamation of two flats to create a single family dwelling complies with one exception set out within City Plan Policy S14 to the principle of the loss of residential units and floorspace; namely, where two units are being joined together to create a family sized dwelling (i.e. contain three or more bedrooms).

In addition, objections have been received from the occupier of one of the flats within the building in respect to the potential impact of the development proposal upon the rights of him and his family under the Human Rights Act (1988) and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1990). Furthermore, the same objector has raised the requirement of the City Council to properly exercise its Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act (2010). On balance, it is considered

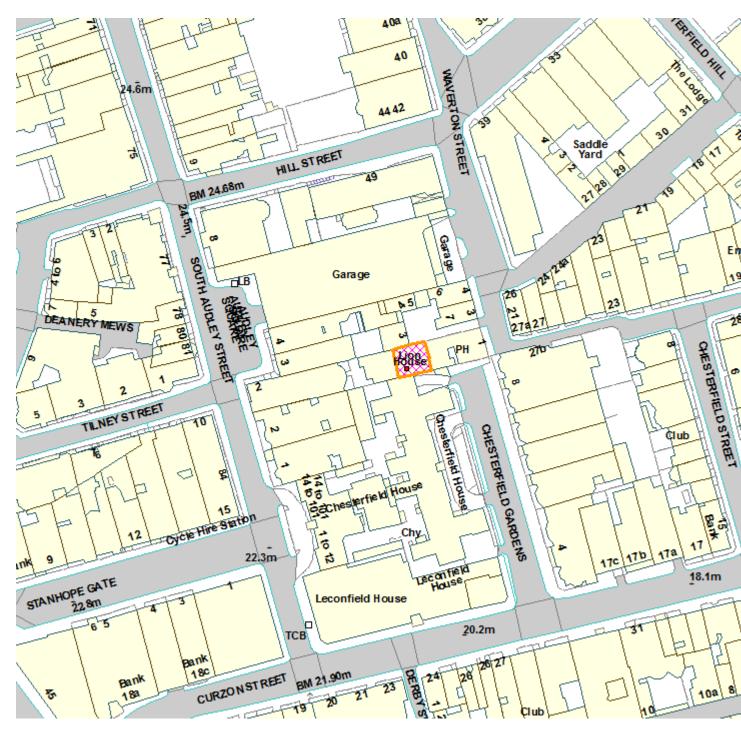
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that the council support available to vulnerable families and the benefits of the proposal to the wider community means that any interference this family's rights are proportionate.

For this reason and the proposal's compliance with adopted UDP and City Plan policies, it is recommended that permission be granted.

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3. LOCATION PLAN



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4. PHOTOGRAPHS



5. CONSULTATIONS

RESIDENTS SOCIETY OF MAYFAIR & ST. JAMES Any responses to be reported verbally.

ADJOINING OWNERS/OCCUPIERS AND OTHER REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED

No. Consulted: 9

Total No. of objections: 15 (11 of which are from the same respondent) on the following grounds:

- Loss of a residential unit.
- Quality of accommodation (size, lighting and glazing).
- No disabled access/lifetime homes.
- Does not take into account the needs of all the community (PPS1) or health impacts (PPS23).
- The amalgamation of the two units at first floor level will significantly increase the rental income of the property.
- Inaccurate site address and inaccurate description of development.
- Does not take into account the rights of the current occupiers of under the Human Rights Act, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Equality Act.
- Lack of cycle parking, open space, internal storage and inadequate floor to ceiling heights
- Construction impacts

PRESS ADVERTISEMENT / SITE NOTICE: Yes

6. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

6.1 The Application Site

The application site relates to Lion House, a four storey property located in Red Lion Yard which is accessed from Waverton Street. The site is located within the Core CAZ and the Mayfair Conservation Area. The property is in residential use and is laid out to provide six residential units. The mix of existing units comprises one studio flat (former housekeeper's), three x 1-bed units and two x 2-bed units.

Presently, all bins are permanently stored in the flats and/or outside of the building. No secure cycle spaces are currently provided.

The immediate surrounding area is residential in character. To the east of the site is a new build development (the former Red Lion Public House at 1 Red Lion Yard), to the south is a nine storey mansion block and to the east is a three storey mews property (3 Red Lion Yard).

6.2 Recent Relevant History

In June 2015 permission was refused for the reconfiguration of the existing building (to include provision of a lift) to provide four residential flats (Class C3) on the grounds that the proposed three-bed flat at ground floor level would be of substandard quality and therefore did not justify the reduction in the number of residential units on site from six to four.

In April 2016 permission was refused for the reconfiguration of the existing building (to include provision of a lift) to provide five residential flats (Class C3) on the grounds that the proposed residential units would have been substandard and would fail to provide acceptable family sized accommodation. As such, the proposal did not justify the reduction in the number of residential units from six to five.

In April 2016 permission was refused for the reconfiguration of the existing building (to include provision of a lift) to provide four residential flats (Class C3) on the grounds that the proposed residential units would have been substandard and would fail to provide acceptable family sized accommodation. As such, the proposal did not justify the reduction in the number of residential units from six to four.

7. THE PROPOSAL

The application seeks permission for internal reconfiguration of the existing building including:

- Amalgamation of the existing two 1-bed flats at first floor level to create a 3-bed unit (family sized);
- Repositioning of an internal stairwell and internal reconfiguration of flats at ground and second floor level; and
- Conversion of existing boiler room to provide communal bin and cycle storage.

The proposed housing mix is 1 studio (27 sqm), one 1-bed (37.5 sqm), one 2-bed (71 sqm) and two 3-bed flats (76.7 sqm & 74 sqm).

The current proposal utilises the existing boiler room for bin storage for all of the flats, as well as providing four secure cycle spaces for the family sized units.

8. DETAILED CONSIDERATIONS

8.1 Land Use

The proposal involves the amalgamation of two flats at first floor, both of which are onebed units, to provide a single three-bed unit. Policy S14 of the City Plan states that all residential uses, floorspace and land will be protected. Proposals that would result in a reduction in the number of residential units will not be acceptable, except where:

- the council considers that reconfiguration or redevelopment of affordable housing would better meet affordable housing need;
- a converted house is being returned to a family-sized dwelling or dwellings; or

• two flats are being joined to create a family-sized dwelling.

Objections have been received to the loss of a residential unit, however, the proposal complies with Policy S14 as the proposed amalgamation of the two flats will create a family sized unit (i.e. containing 3+ bedrooms).

Standard of Residential Accommodation

With the exception of the bedsit at ground floor (Flat 1A), all proposed units exceed nationally described minimum space standards and the housing technical requirements.

The London Plan requires new 3-bed units to have a minimum space standard of 74 sqm (GIA). The amalgamated residential units at first floor has a floorspace of 76.7 sqm (GIA) and therefore meets this minimum internal space standard. In addition to the GLA guidance, the DCLG's Technical housing standards (March 2015) requires single bedrooms to have a floor area of at least 7.5 sqm and to be at least 2.15m wide. The proposal complies with these standards.

Objections have been received on the grounds that the amalgamated flat would fall below City Council standards in terms of size, quality and layout and that the third bedroom would be insufficiently lit with inadequate glazing. The amalgamated unit would be triple aspect enabling good levels of light and ventilation and is considered to be adequate in terms of quality of accommodation, and is therefore acceptable in accordance with Policy S29 which requires developments to improve the living environment for residential occupants.

An objector states that the ground floor studio has been used to store equipment and building materials to maintain the building since 2005 and this has become the lawful use of this part of the building. The objector therefore argues that permission is required to convert this floorspace to provide Flat 1a at ground floor level and the flat therefore needs to comply with current standards in terms of size, layout, storage, ventilation and daylight. The lawful use of this part of the building is unclear and there is therefore a possibility that planning permission is required to reinstate its use as a flat. If this is the case, it is accepted that this flat does not comply with current space standards. However the works propose to improve the quality of a part of the building has historically been used as a self-contained flat by increasing its size (by relocating an internal stair) and by providing an additional window to serve the main habitable space (by relocating an existing toilet/shower room). Given the lack of clarity in respect to the lawful use of this part of the building and its historical use as a self-contained flat, it is not considered that a refusal on the quality, standard and layout of this flat could be justified in this instance.

Policy H10 requires housing developments to include an element of amenity space, including the use of balconies and roof terraces on sites within the CAZ. An objection has been received on the grounds that only one of the ground floor flats has access to a patio area. The UDP recognises that it will not be appropriate for balconies or roof gardens to be provided in some cases, for example, where a straightforward change of use or conversion is proposed with no external alterations. For this reason, a refusal on this ground is therefore not justifiable in this instance.

Increase in Rental Income from the Building

An occupier of the building has objected on the ground that the amalgamation of the two flats at first floor level would significantly increase the rental income of the property. The objector accepts that the flats within Lion Housie do not constitute 'affordable housing'. However, due to the potential increase in rental income arising from the amalgamation of the two flats at first floor level, the objector argues that it would remove any contribution the accommodation currently makes to the provision of affordable housing by providing accommodation for a tenant receiving housing benefit. For this reason, the objector argues that the proposal fails to meet the first exception within City Plan Policy S14 to the loss of residential units; namely, where the City Council considers that reconfiguration or redevelopment of affordable housing would better meet affordable housing need.

The objector is correct in accepting that the residential accommodation within Lion House does not fall within the definition of 'affordable housing'. The City Plan defines affordable housing as, 'Subsidised housing at below market prices or rents intended for those households who cannot afford housing at market rates'. The flats within Lion House are for rent or sale where the price is set in the open market and cannot therefore be affordable housing.

The amalgamation of the two flats at first floor level to create a three-bedroom flat is therefore not in breach of City Plan Policy S16 that protects affordable housing and floorspace that is used or was last used as affordable housing. Whilst the objector is correct in his argument that the loss of a residential unit arising through the amalgamation of the two flats at first floor level fails to meet the first exception within City Plan Policy S14, this is not the part of the policy that permits the loss of a residential unit in this instance. As set out above, the loss of a residential unit is policy-compliant as it accords with the third of the exceptions set out within City Plan Policy S14; namely, where two flats are being joined to create a family-sized dwelling.

8.2 Townscape and Design

No external alterations are proposed and therefore the proposal will preserve the character and appearance of the Mayfair Conservation Area.

8.3 Residential Amenity

Neighbouring residents have objected due to the potential impacts during construction such as noise, safety, congestion and general disruption. In order to limit disturbance to neighbours, the standard working hours condition is recommended to ensure that building works are only undertaken during the day Monday – Friday, Saturday morning and not at all on Sundays and Bank Holidays. Given the works proposed, it is not considered that any further restrictions would be reasonable.

8.4 Transportation/Parking

The proposal includes the provision of four additional cycle parking spaces which are welcomed. The London Plan requires two cycle parking spaces to be provided for each new residential unit. An objection has been raised regarding insufficient cycle parking

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provision. As there is no increase in the number of residential units the application could not be reasonably refused on this basis.

8.5 Economic Considerations

Any economic benefits generated by the development are welcome.

8.6 Access

An objection has been raised on the basis that the proposal does not provide disabled access and would not comply with the Building Regulations or Lifetime Homes Standards. Given the constraints of the existing building it is considered that there is no reasonable means to provide fully inclusive access to the proposed flats and previous applications have been refused on the grounds that the provision of an internal lift would compromise the internal standards of existing flats. It is, however, proposed to reposition an internal stairwell. The new staircase is wider and less steep and would be lit by existing windows. Although no disabled access is provided, it provides an easier means of access for the elderly and those with reduced mobility compared to the existing situations. The Liftetime Homes Standard has now been superseded by the Building Regulations and this issue will now be entirely dealt with by Building Control.

8.7 Other UDP/Westminster Policy Considerations

Refuse

The drawings submitted with the application indicate a bin store at ground floor level which is welcome.

8.8 London Plan

This application raises no strategic issues.

8.9 National Policy/Guidance Considerations

The City Plan and UDP policies referred to in the consideration of this application are considered to be consistent with the NPPF unless stated otherwise.

8.10 Planning Obligations

The development does not trigger any planning obligations.

No additional floorspace is proposed and therefore the development is not CIL-liable.

8.11 Environmental Impact Assessment

The proposal is of insufficient scale as to trigger an environmental assessment.

8.12 Other Issues

Background

One of the 1-bed units which are proposed to be amalgamated at first floor level is occupied by a person with a known disability and on-going health issues, his partner (who is also their carer) and two young children whom also have an identified disability. They are categorised within the City of Westminster as a Vulnerable Household and by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) as being within "Child Poverty Dimension I: Income and Material Deprivation".

An objector within this household has stated that the applicant (their landlord) is currently seeking their eviction using Ground 6 of Schedule 2 of the Housing Act 1988. This is a mandatory ground for possession upon the Landlord proving its 'Intent to Develop'. In essence, the objector believes that by granting this permission, it will directly result in their eviction, resulting in this vulnerable family becoming homeless. Given their personal circumstances, the aforementioned occupant has objected on the grounds that the proposal would directly interfere with his and his family's rights under the Equality Act, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Human Rights Act.

The information provided by the occupier of one of the flats within the building is considered to be sufficient to evidence that Human Rights, Equalities and Rights of the Child duties have been engaged, and the City Council has a duty to ensure that it satisfies its statutory duty of having due regard to the various rights when determining this application.

The Equality Act, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Human Rights Act

The Human Rights Act

The Human Rights Act requires that the City Council in its role as local planning authority acts consistently with the European Convention on Human Rights. The occupier of one of the flats within the building has objected to the proposal arguing that it would interfere with his rights under Article 6 (Right to a fair trial), Article 8 (Right to respect for private and family life), Article 14 (Prohibition of discrimination) and Article 1 of the First Protocol (Protection of property).

It is generally accepted that the decision making process within the Town and Country Planning regime and the opportunity to apply to judicially review the City Council's decision ensures compliance with Article 6.

Article 8 rights are not rights without limit and may be interfered with where it is in accordance with the law and is necessary in a democratic society. Article 8 rights should be respected as part of the planning process, but they are not guaranteed and it is a planning judgement against all the other material considerations, wider public interests and other private interests. Article 8 does not give a right to a home but, where someone has a dwelling, it may interfere with their Article 8 rights to require them to move from that home. As the Town and Country Planning regime is designed to

balance the rights of individuals against the interests of the wider community, the City Council must consider the potential interference with human rights and ensure that any reasons for interfering with these rights are proportionate.

Article 14 is concerned with the enjoyment, protection and application of the Convention rights without discrimination. The basis of Article 14 is that everyone should enjoy the same human rights and have equal access to them without discrimination on any ground. To demonstrate a breach of this right, one would need to establish that discrimination has affected ones enjoyment of one of the rights, but one would not have to prove that the right has been breached. Article 14 is relevant where any of the Convention rights are triggered, but is not a standalone right (i.e. one could not use Article 14 on its own to claim discrimination).

Article 1 of the first protocol is the right of property and possessions. The overarching principle is that there should be no interference with the peaceful enjoyment of possessions and property. It is a qualified right in that any interference has to be lawful under domestic law, and a fair balance has to be struck between the general interest of the community and the need to protect the individuals' fundamental rights by applying a proportionality test. The concept of possessions is not limited to ownership of physical goods. There are circumstances where Article 1 of the first protocol rights can be interfered with where it is proportionate, lawful and in the public interest.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

The protection of the interests of children falls under Article 3 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the best interests of the child is something which should be a <u>primary consideration</u> when determining this application. The best interests of the child should be identified and then maintained at the forefront of the City Council's mind during the consideration of material considerations, and no other consideration should be afforded considerably more weight than the best interest of the child. Ultimately the decision to be made is whether the interference with rights is proportionate when all other material considerations have been taken into account.

The Government's online Planning Practice Guidance states, "Local authorities need to consider whether children's best interests are relevant to any planning issue under consideration. In doing so, they will want to ensure their approach is proportionate. They need to consider the case before them, and need to be mindful that the best interests of a particular child will not always outweigh other considerations including those that impact negatively on the environment or the wider community. This will include considering the scope to mitigate any potential harm through non-planning measures, for example through intervention or extra support for the family through social, health and education services". (Paragraph 028 (Ref: ID: 21b-028-20150901).

The Equality Act

Section 149(1) of the Equality Act 2010 sets out the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) in that local authorities must have due regard to the need to:

(a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;

(b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;

(c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

The relevant protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.

In order to discharge the PSED, the City Council must have due regard to the issues, the effect the development may have on those with protected characteristics and the weight which should be given to those effects. The occupier of one of the flats within the building has provided evidence that he has been assessed by the DWP in the highest immobility category requiring indefinite care and support and therefore Officers are satisfied that he has 'protected characteristics'.

Consideration

Based on the information that has been provided, the Council consider that there is a strong possibility that the approval of this proposal will result in a vulnerable family, including children becoming homeless. Their personal circumstances are a material consideration of this proposal and the 'protected characteristics' have been given material weight during the evaluation of this application.

Additionally, both children currently attend school and specialist services locally. The protection of the children and the best interests of the child have to be taken into account as a primary consideration in the determination of this proposal.

The existing accommodation does not have a lift. It is not considered that a residential unit within Lion House is the most appropriate location for someone requiring indefinite care and support for mobility purposes. Flat 2, where one of the objectors resides is 41 sqm in area (GIA) and contains one bedroom. This flat is occupied by this objector, his partner and their two young children (8 and 10 years old). The London Plan states that the minimum space standard for a four person household is 70 sqm (GIA). It is considered that Flat 2 is not adequate in terms of size and number of bedrooms for a vulnerable family, including children, disabled members and those with reduced mobility.

There is a possibility that the family could be accommodated within the building once it had been converted; however, this would be down to the landlord.

Additionally, the Council has policies for assisting homeless families. When a member of the public seeks new council accommodation, their specialist requirements are considered including the accessibility of properties. Schools and special services for all of the flat occupants are available elsewhere in the borough.

The rights of family, the applicant and the interests of the wider community have to be balanced when assessing this application. While the Council sympathises with the

objector and their family, it is considered that the council support available to vulnerable families, and the benefits of the proposal to the wider community, as highlighted in other sections of this report (i.e. creation of two family sized units in an area with a known deficiency in this type of housing, increasing the size of existing substandard flats, increasing the illumination of main living space with Flat 1a, and provision of cycle and waste storage), outweigh the objections that have been raised. In all the circumstances, it is therefore considered that any interference with the family's rights is proportionate.

All points raised during the consultation period have informed the recommendation for this permission and have been documented in this report.

The objector living within the building has stated that the proposal does not take into the account the needs of all the community and impacts on health and specifically references PPS1 (Planning Policy Statement 1 Delivering Sustainable Development) and PPS23 (Planning and Pollution Control) which are both now defunct and have been replaced by the NPPF. Policy S14, which allows the amalgamation of unit to create a new family sized unit, is consistent with the NPPF.

Inaccurate Site Address and unauthorised change of use

An objector stated that the application was misleading as it was publicised with an inaccurate site address. Subsequently the site address was amended and re-publicised to ensure compliance with the statutory consultation requirements.

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 1. Application form
- 2. Letter from occupier of 3 Red Lion Yard Mayfair, London, dated 13 December 2016
- 3. Letter from occupier of 3 Waverton St., London, dated 13 December 2016
- 4. Letter from occupier of 2 Red Lion Yard, London, dated 12 December 2016
- 5. Letter from occupier of 2 Red Lion Yard, London, dated 12 December 2016
- 6. Letters and emails from occupier of Flat 2, Lion House, dated 6, 12, 13 and 20 December 2016, 23, 24, 26 and 30 January 2017 and 3, 7 and 9 February 2017

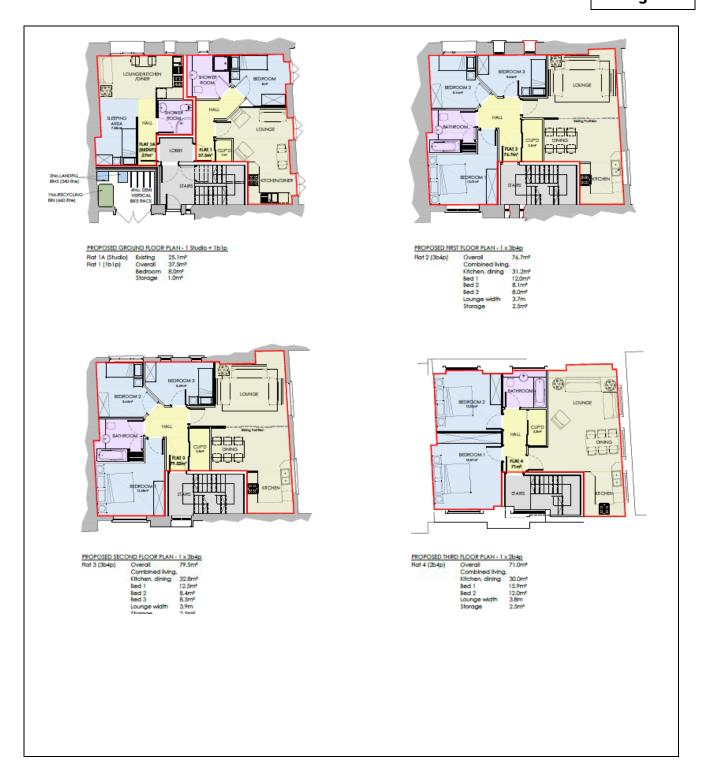
(Please note: All the application drawings and other relevant documents and Background Papers are available to view on the Council's website)

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUERIES ABOUT THIS REPORT PLEASE CONTACT THE PRESENTING OFFICER: MARK HOLLINGTON BY EMAIL AT mhollington2@westminster.gov.uk

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10. KEY DRAWINGS





DRAFT DECISION LETTER

Address: Lion House, 1 Red Lion Yard, London, W1J 5JR,

Proposal: Internal reconfiguration of the existing building to include the amalgamation of the existing two flats at first floor level to create a family sized dwelling, and conversion of existing boiler room for use as a bin store for all of the flats and for the storage of 4 bicycles.

Reference: 16/10955/FULL

Plan Nos: Drawing 4 1 1 1 - 4 0 2

Case Officer: Damian Lavelle

Direct Tel. No. 020 7641 5974

Recommended Condition(s) and Reason(s)

1 The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the drawings and other documents listed on this decision letter, and any drawings approved subsequently by the City Council as local planning authority pursuant to any conditions on this decision letter.

Reason:

For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

- 2 Except for piling, excavation and demolition work, you must carry out any building work which can be heard at the boundary of the site only:
 - o between 08.00 and 18.00 Monday to Friday; ,
 - o between 08.00 and 13.00 on Saturday; and ,
 - o not at all on Sundays, bank holidays and public holidays.

You must carry out piling, excavation and demolition work only:

- o between 08.00 and 18.00 Monday to Friday; and ,
- o not at all on Saturdays, Sundays, bank holidays and public holidays.

Noisy work must not take place outside these hours unless otherwise agreed through a Control of Pollution Act 1974 section 61 prior consent in special circumstances (for example, to meet police traffic restrictions, in an emergency or in the interests of public safety). (C11AB)

Reason:

To protect the environment of neighbouring occupiers. This is as set out in S29 and S32 of Westminster's City Plan (November 2016) and ENV 6 of our Unitary Development Plan that we adopted in January 2007. (R11AC)

3 The three bedroom residential units shown on the approved drawings must be provided and thereafter shall be permanently retained as accommodation which (in addition to the living space) provides three separate rooms capable of being occupied as bedrooms.

Reason:

To protect family accommodation as set out in S15 of Westminster's City Plan (November 2016) and H 5 of our Unitary Development Plan that we adopted in January 2007. (R07DC)

4 You must provide the waste store shown on drawing 4111-402 before anyone moves any of the new/reconfigured flats hereby approved. You must clearly mark it and make it available at all times to everyone using the flats. You must store waste inside the property and only put it outside just before it is going to be collected. You must not use the waste store for any other purpose. (C14DC)

Reason:

To protect the environment and provide suitable storage for waste as set out in S44 of Westminster's City Plan (November 2016) and ENV 12 of our Unitary Development Plan that we adopted in January 2007. (R14BD)

5 You must provide each cycle parking space shown on the approved drawings prior to the occupation of any of the new/reconfigured flats hereby approved. Thereafter the cycle spaces must be retained and the space used for no other purpose without the prior written consent of the local planning authority.

Reason:

To provide cycle parking spaces for people using the development as set out in Policy 6.9 (Table 6.3) of the London Plan 2015.

Informative(s):

In dealing with this application the City Council has implemented the requirement in the National Planning Policy Framework to work with the applicant in a positive and proactive way. We have made available detailed advice in the form of our statutory policies in Westminster's City Plan (November 2016), Unitary Development Plan, Supplementary Planning documents, planning briefs and other informal written guidance, as well as offering a full pre application advice service, in order to ensure that applicant has been given every opportunity to submit an application which is likely to be considered favourably. In addition, where appropriate, further guidance was offered to the applicant at the validation stage.

Please note: the full text for informatives can be found in the Council's Conditions, Reasons & Policies handbook, copies of which can be found in the Committee Room whilst the meeting is in progress, and on the Council's website.