

CITY OF WESTMINSTER			
PLANNING APPLICATIONS SUB COMMITTEE	Date 4 August 2020	Classification For General Release	
Report of Director of Place Shaping and Town Planning		Ward(s) involved Tachbrook	
Subject of Report	Dolphin Square, London		
Appeal Proposal	Part redevelopment and refurbishment of Dolphin Square including the reconfiguration of existing residential (Class C3) apartments; demolition and reconstruction of Rodney House to provide a new ground plus 9 storey building with 2 basement levels to provide residential (Class C3), serviced apartments (Class C3 temporary sleeping accommodation) , retail (Class A1-A4), leisure (Class D2); single storey rooftop extensions to the retained and refurbished Houses to provide additional residential (Class C3); new row of townhouses (Class C3) to the Western Carriageway; landscaping and new publicly accessible open space; new and reconfigured access points; and all necessary enabling works. (Includes 57 on-site affordable and intermediate rented units).		
Agent	DP9		
On behalf of	Dolphin Square Limited		
Registered Number	18/01099/FULL	Date Inquiry to Open	22 September 2020
Appeal Reference	APP/X5990/W/20/3245289		
Date Appeal Received	21 January 2020		
Historic Building Grade	Unlisted		
Registered Park and Garden Grade	Grade II		
Conservation Area	Dolphin Square		

1. VIEW SOUGHT

For Committee's consideration:

- Does the Committee agree with officers that the demolition of the amenity block to the rear of Rodney House and this part of the gardens would be harmful to Dolphin Square Gardens (a grade II Registered Park and Garden) and to the Dolphin Square Conservation Area.

2. SUMMARY

Site:

The Dolphin Square Estate is in a riverside estate within Pimlico. It was built in the 1930's and completed in 1938. It is a rectangular/quadrangle building comprising 13 'houses' arranged around a central courtyard garden. The houses are ten storeys (including ground) in height except for Rodney House fronting Chichester Street, which is seven storeys. The Dolphin Square Estate forms the majority of the Dolphin Square Conservation Area, and the building is identified as an unlisted building of merit in the Dolphin Square Conservation Area Audit

The central courtyard comprises a landscaped garden designed by Richard Sudell, (president of the Institute of Landscape Gardens at the time), which includes a garden located above the amenity block to the rear of Rodney House, which is the Spanish/Mexican Gardens (later renamed Moroccan Gardens). Historic England added Dolphin Square Gardens to the Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England in July 2018 and they are now listed Grade II.

History:

The City Council received an application for the comprehensive refurbishment and reconfiguration of the existing buildings, and new build elements, to increase the overall number of residential units across the estate by 230 on 6 February 2018. These proposals included the demolition and reconstruction of Rodney House and new landscaping.

The Director of Place Shaping and Town Planning reported the application to the Planning (Major Applications) Sub-Committee held on 4 June 2019. Officers recommended the application for approval. However, the Committee unanimously resolved to refuse permission, subject to the views of the Mayor of London, on the following grounds:

1. The demolition of Rodney House would cause significant harm to the Dolphin Square Conservation Area with the proposed replacement building considered an inferior design along with the inappropriate rooftop extensions to retained and refurbished Houses, which would adversely affect the area's character and appearance.
2. The lack of family sized units was considered unacceptable and not the appropriate mix of housing required to retain families in Westminster; and
3. The proposed intensification of short term let residential property was considered excessive and deemed likely to negatively impact on the amenity of local residents.

The Mayor of London was content to allow the City Council to determine the application and so it was subsequently refused. The first reason for refusal deals with heritage assets and it states:

"The demolition of Rodney House and the proposed replacement building, along with the rooftop extensions to the retained and refurbished houses, would harm the appearance of this building and fail to maintain or improve (preserve or enhance) the character and appearance of the Dolphin Square Conservation Area. This would not meet S25 and S28 of Westminster's City Plan (November 2016) and DES 1, DES 5, DES 6, DES 9 and paras 10.108 to 10.128 of our Unitary Development Plan that we adopted in January 2007. The public benefits which the proposals would secure would not outweigh the harm which it would cause and therefore the proposals would also be contrary to Paragraph 196 of the National Planning Policy Framework."

The City Council received notification an appeal had been lodged against the City Council's decision

to refuse permission on 21 January 2020. The Planning Inspectorate have scheduled an inquiry to open on 22 September 2020, after initially being delayed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

On 6 March 2020, the Planning Inspectorate informed the City Council that the Secretary of State considers that he should determine the appeal himself. This means that instead of writing a decision, the Inspector will prepare a report and recommendation after the inquiry, which will be forwarded to the Secretary of State.

Consideration:

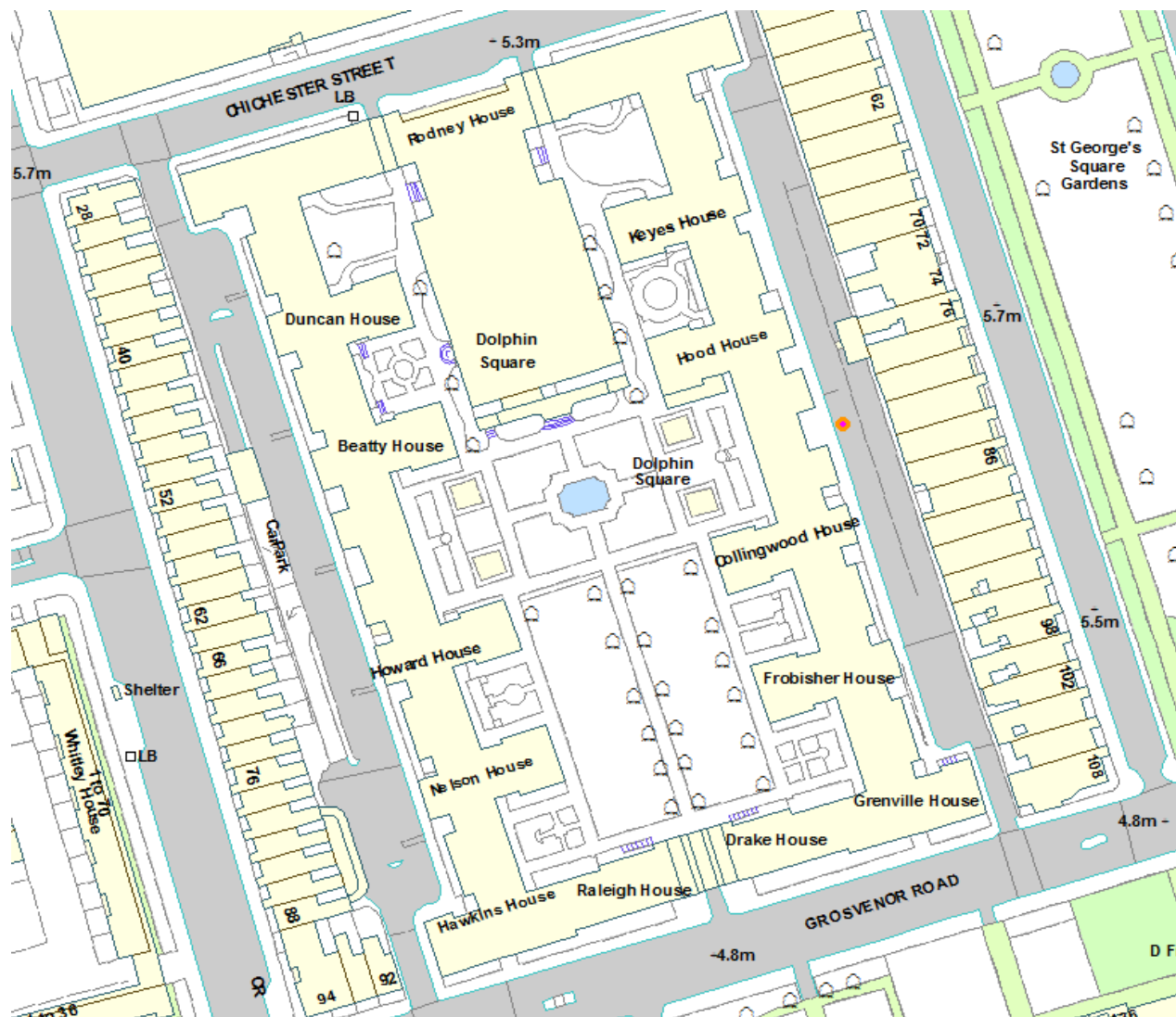
The reason for refusal does not make explicit reference to the demolition of the amenity block and the alterations to the grade II registered garden. This will be an issue to be debated at the forthcoming public inquiry and officers therefore seek further clarification from the committee on this issue.

The reasons for Historic England listing Dolphin Square Gardens as grade II include their design interest, rarity, historic interest (being a rare survival of the work Richard Sudell) and the degree of survival, notwithstanding the reconfiguration of the former Spanish/Mexican garden and one of the western recessed gardens.

The proposals for the demolition and redevelopment of Rodney House include the demolition of the amenity block which is the large single storey pavilion attached to the rear of Rodney House. In the proposals the amenity block would be replaced by new gardens. The southern end of the amenity block has a raised covered area and copper roof supported by stucco columns. This area leads to the Spanish/Mexican Gardens (later renamed Moroccan Gardens) on top of the roof of the amenity block. The Spanish/Mexican Gardens have been altered from Sudell's original design, nevertheless the amenity block and the roof garden contribute positively to the significance of the registered gardens and the Dolphin Square Conservation Area. The proposals also include other, more minor, changes to the gardens adjacent to the amenity block.

In order to deal with this issue at the forthcoming public inquiry, officers are seeking Committee's confirmation that they agree with officers that the demolition of the amenity block and the alterations to the northern end of the gardens would be harmful to the significance of both the registered gardens and the Dolphin Square Conservation Area.

3. LOCATION PLAN



This production includes mapping data licensed from Ordnance Survey with the permission of the controller of Her Majesty's Stationary Office (C) Crown Copyright and /or database rights 2013.
All rights reserved License Number LA 100019597

4. PHOTOGRAPHS



Google 3D Image of the Appeal Site



Appeal Site with Rodney House Outlined in Red



View Looking North Towards Rodney House

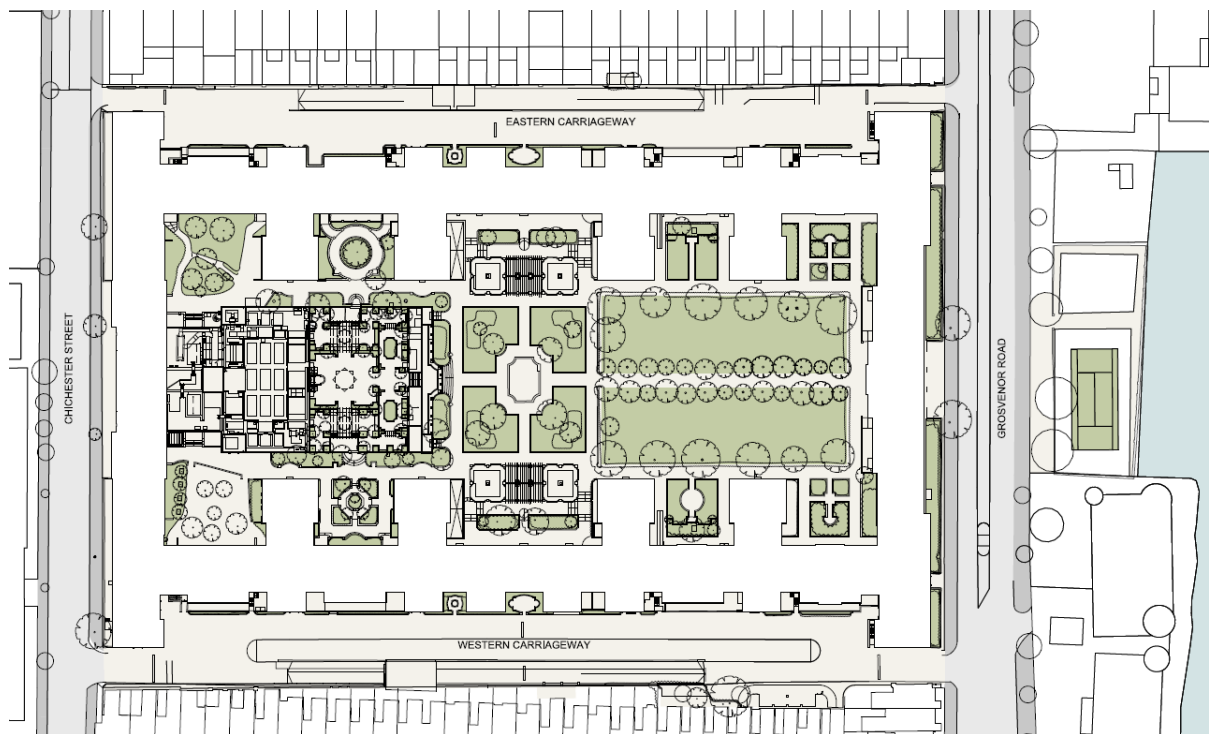


Views of amenity block with Spanish/Mexican Gardens (Moroccan Gardens) on top

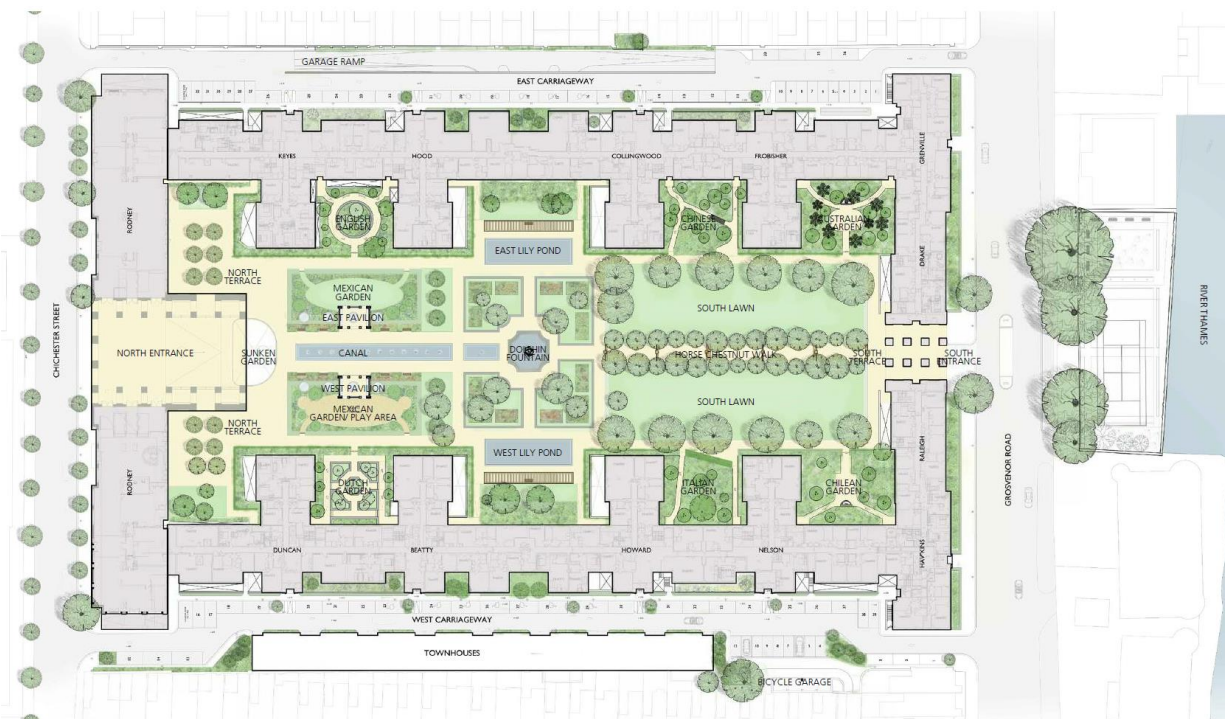


Views of amenity block with Spanish/Mexican Gardens (Moroccan Gardens) on top

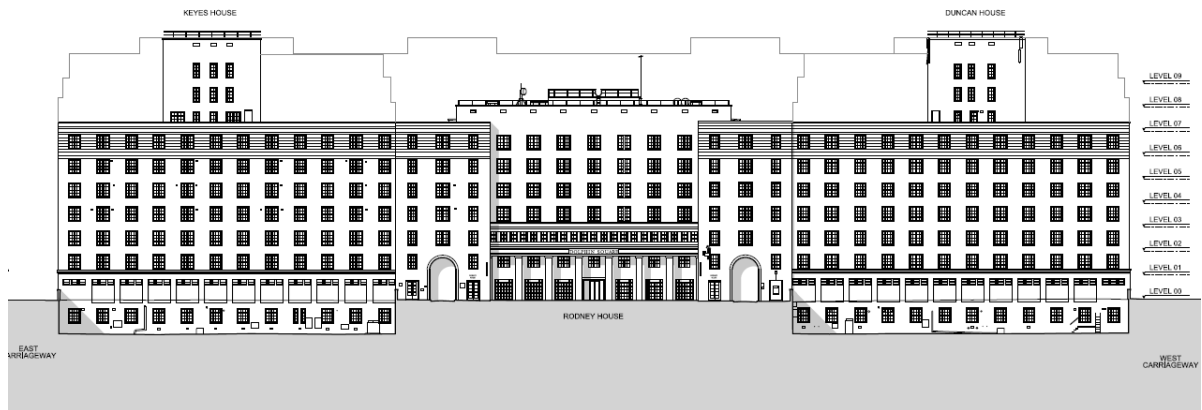
5. KEY DRAWINGS and IMAGES



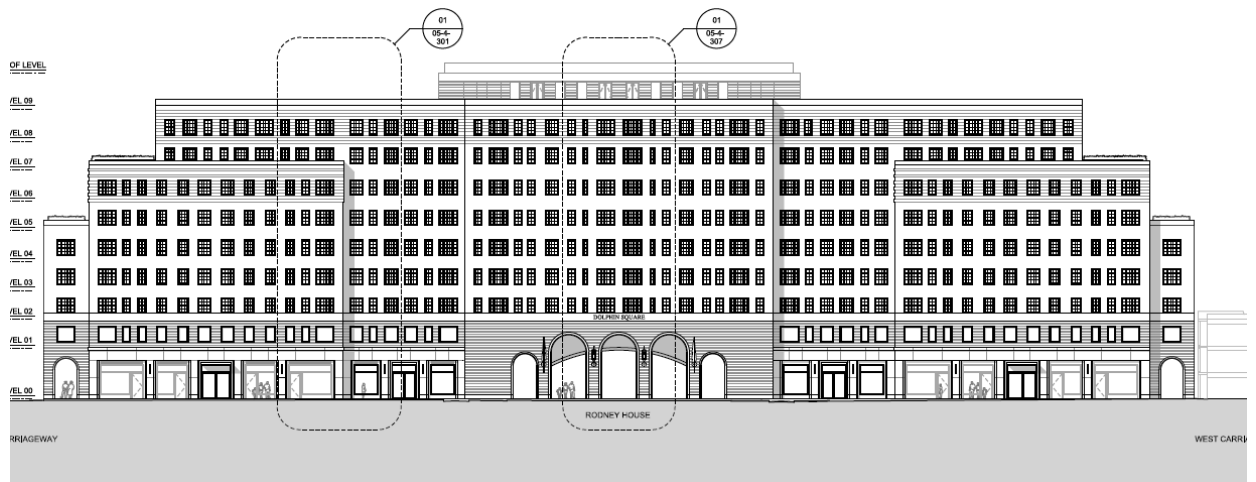
Existing Landscape Plan



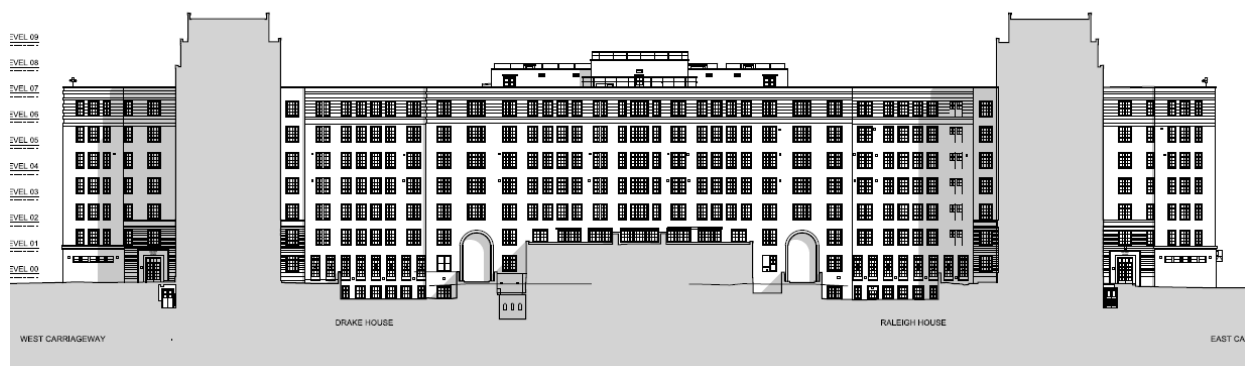
Proposed Landscape Plan



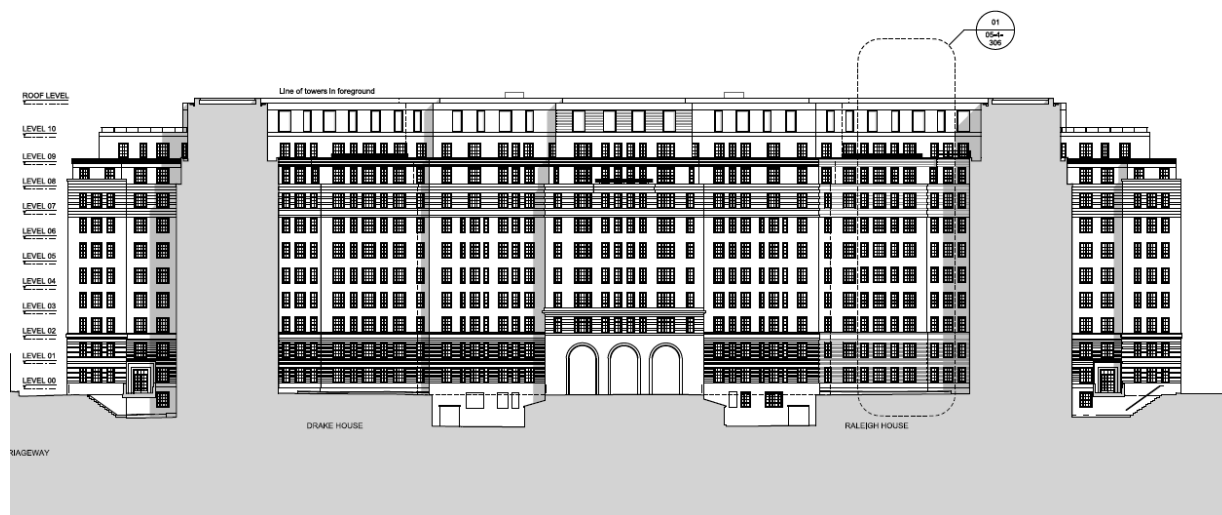
Existing External Elevation – Rodney House



Proposed External Elevation – Rodney House



Existing Internal Elevation – Rodney House



Proposed Internal Elevation – Rodney House



Computer Generated Images



Item No.
6

(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: ROBERT AYTON BY EMAIL AT rayton@westminster.gov.uk
--