

APPLICATION NOS: 15/01319/FUL & 15/01319/LBC		OFFICER: Miss Michelle Payne
DATE REGISTERED: 28th July 2015		DATE OF EXPIRY: 22nd September 2015
WARD: Park		PARISH: n/a
APPLICANT:	Mr J Hawtin	
AGENT:	Mr B Stanley	
LOCATION:	Compass House, Lypiatt Road, Cheltenham	
PROPOSAL:	Extension to Compass House creating two storeys of additional office space at ground and first floor with car parking at lower ground floor, and replacement windows to existing modern rear extension (excluding penthouse) - revised scheme following withdrawal of application refs.15/00518/FUL & 15/00519/LBC	

Update to Officer Report

1. OFFICER COMMENTS

1.1. Determining Issues

1.1.1 The main considerations when determining this application relate to the principle of development; design; impact upon the listed building, its setting and the wider conservation area; impact on neighbouring amenity; and highway safety.

1.2. Principle of development

1.2.1 Compass House is solely occupied by Charles Russell Speechlys, a law firm with headquarters in London, and offices in the UK, Europe and Middle East. The company is a large employer in Cheltenham and has outgrown the existing accommodation provided within the building and has been unable to find suitable alternative premises. Moreover, the company has been at Compass House for 15 years and has a desire to stay in their current established location. The amount of additional floor space proposed is critical to allow for the future growth of the company.

1.2.2 The thrust behind the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is a “presumption in favour of sustainable development”. The framework sets out the need to balance the economic, social and environmental aspects of new development when determining applications so as enable the development of land and buildings to support economic growth, whilst improving and conserving the built environment.

1.2.3 Importantly, paragraph 19 of the NPPF states that “significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth through the planning system”.

1.3. Design and impact upon the listed building and conservation area

1.3.1 Compass House is a Grade II listed building located within the Central conservation area. A number of the surrounding buildings are also Grade II or Grade II* listed.

1.3.2 The Conservation Officer raises no objection to the principle of further extending the building provided the extension is of an appropriate scale and design so as not to dominate the site or detract from the special architectural interest of Compass House and the character of the conservation area. The full-height curved bow window to the side elevation of the building is considered to be one of the most interesting and significant

architectural features on the building and, as such, any new development should not detract from its simple elegant form. In addition, due to the nature of the site, both the front and rear elevations need to be equally successful as they are both prominent within their own streetscapes.

1.3.3 The closure of the existing gap between Compass House and Carrick House, and loss of glimpses of Southwood Lane through the site from Lypiatt Road that would result from the development is unfortunate but not significant enough to resist development.

1.3.4 The proposed extension is contemporary in design and such an approach is considered to be appropriate. The extension would clearly read as a modern addition and would sit comfortably alongside the 1960's extension and the listed building.

1.3.5 Concerns over the use of planted living walls were raised at pre-application stage in respect of the future maintenance; elevations showing the building both with and without the 'green wall' were therefore requested to ensure that the scheme could be successful over the long term if the planting failed. Should Members be minded to grant consent, it is suggested that a condition be imposed requiring a long term maintenance strategy to be submitted and agreed prior to the installation of the living wall. A condition is also suggested which requires the full palette of external facing materials to be submitted for due consideration.

1.3.6 The Architect's Panel when commenting on the scheme, raise "some minor concerns over the practicality of the detailing and look of the smaller areas of 'green wall'" and suggest that they may not be necessary on the SE elevation, yet the Conservation Officer feels that the Lypiatt Road elevation looks especially bland without the vegetation. Officers however, on balance, consider all elements of the scheme to be successful, with or without the 'green walls'. Furthermore, the Architect's Panel generally "thought this was an interesting scheme and would therefore support it".

1.3.7 The main concern raised by the Conservation Officer relates to the building's impact on Southwood Lane by virtue of its height, mass and positioning immediately adjacent to the lane, suggesting that the building would result in an overbearing and intimidating presence when combined with the existing extension to Compass House. The Conservation Officer therefore proposes that the upper floors be set back from the boundary wall fronting Southwood Lane. However, such a revision would inevitably bring the extension closer to the listed building and the historic bow window, as the full extent of floor space proposed is required to meet the needs of the company; such a revision is therefore not supported by officers. Furthermore, a building at the edge of the lane would be commensurate with the other buildings on this side of Southwood Lane.

1.3.8 The proposal is therefore generally considered to be acceptable in respect of design, and impact on the listed building and conservation area.

1.3.9 Officers acknowledge that there may be some shortcomings in the scheme, however paragraph 134 of the NPPF states 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 securing its optimum viable use". With this in mind, although the proposal is not fully supported by the Conservation Team, officers consider that on balance the justification for the works to enable the economic growth of a well-established local business outweighs the identified harm to the character of Southwood Lane.

1.4. Impact on neighbouring amenity

1.4.1 The properties that would be most affected by the proposed extension are nos. 15 & 17 Southwood Lane, a pair of three storey dwellings erected on the site of a former garage block in 2000, which sit directly opposite the application site, and to a lesser degree, no. 19. It is acknowledged that these properties, unlike their neighbours, currently benefit from views across the application site through to Lypiatt Road. However Members will be aware that the loss of a view is not a material planning consideration and cannot form the basis of a refusal of planning permission. Therefore, whilst outlook from these properties would undoubtedly be altered, it would not be to an unacceptable degree, and the proposed extension would not result in any significantly overbearing impact given its position across the lane.

1.4.2 In addition, the proposed extension has been thoughtfully designed so as to prevent any overlooking of nearby residential properties. There are no clear glazed upper floor windows in the elevation fronting Southwood Lane and therefore no overlooking or loss of privacy to the residential properties opposite would occur. Shallow projecting bays with narrow side lights are proposed at both ground and first floor to achieve natural light together with areas of obscured glazed glass blocks at upper ground floor level.

1.4.3 Furthermore, the proposed extension would not have any unacceptable impact on daylight to habitable rooms in the properties opposite the site. It is acknowledged that the extension will undoubtedly have some limited impact on levels of daylight currently afforded to nos. 15 & 17 Southwood Lane however the main living room and terrace serving these dwellings is located at first floor level, with the principal outlook at ground floor being to the rear. An additional drawing has been submitted by the applicant's agent illustrating that the development would pass the 25° light test in respect of the first floor living accommodation.

1.4.4 The commercial property to the rear of Carrick House to the north has windows in its side elevation which would undoubtedly be affected by the proposed extension however these are secondary windows.

1.4.5 The proposal is therefore considered to be acceptable on amenity grounds.

1.5. Access and highway safety

1.5.1 It is acknowledged that the proposals would result in the loss of three existing car parking spaces within the site. However, although the increase in office floor space would be likely to increase demand for parking, the site is centrally located with on-street car parking available in the surrounding area. The GCC Highways Officer has reviewed the proposals and considers that the residual cumulative impacts of the development would not be severe and therefore raises no Highway objection.

1.6. Other considerations

1.6.1 Concerns have been raised by local residents in relation to noise, dust and vibration during construction works. Should Members be minded to grant consent, it is suggested that a condition is imposed requiring a detailed Construction Method Statement to be submitted and agreed, prior to the commencement of works.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1. With all of the above in mind, the recommendation is to grant both planning permission and listed building consent subject to the following conditions:

3. CONDITIONS

15/01319/FUL

- 1 The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of five years from the date of this permission.
Reason: To accord with the provisions of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
- 2 The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with Drawing Nos. 1205(SK)043, 1205(SK)044, 1205(SK)045, 1205(SK)046, 1205(SK)047 and 1205(SK)048 received by the Local Planning Authority on 27th July 2015.
Reason: To ensure the development is carried out in strict accordance with the approved drawings.
- 3 Prior to the commencement of development, plans showing the existing and proposed ground levels and slab levels of the proposed and adjacent buildings shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall thereafter be implemented strictly in accordance with the agreed details.
Reason: To ensure a satisfactory relationship of the proposed building with the adjoining properties and land in accordance with Local Plan Policies CP4 and CP7 relating to safe and sustainable living, and design.
- 4 Prior to the commencement of development, drainage plans for the disposal of surface water and foul sewage shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall thereafter be implemented in accordance with the approved details prior to first occupation of the development.
Reason: To ensure that the development is provided with a satisfactory means of drainage as well as to reduce the risk of creating or exacerbating a flooding problem and to minimise the risk of pollution in accordance with Local Plan Policy UI2 relating to development and flooding.
- 5 Prior to the commencement of development, a Construction Method Statement shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved statement shall be adhered to throughout the construction period. The statement shall:
 - a) specify the type and number of vehicles;
 - b) provide for the parking of vehicles of site operatives and visitors;
 - c) provide for the loading and unloading of plant and materials;
 - d) provide for the storage of plant and materials used in constructing the development;
 - e) provide wheel washing facilities;
 - f) specify the intended hours of construction operatives; and
 - g) provide details of intended measures to control dust, noise and vibration during construction.

Reason: To reduce the potential impact on the public highway in the interests of highway safety and to protect the amenity of neighbouring residential properties in accordance with Local Plan Policies TP1 and CP4 relating to development and highway safety, and safe and sustainable living.

- 6 Prior to any construction works above slab level, an annotated elevation with a detailed specification of all external materials and finishes (including all windows and external doors) together with samples of the proposed facing materials shall be submitted to and

approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be implemented strictly in accordance with the details so approved and maintained as such thereafter.

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory form of development in accordance with Local Plan Policy CP7 relating to design.

- 7 Prior to the installation of the planted living walls, a comprehensive management strategy shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The management strategy shall provide:
- a) full details of the planting trough/planter (including colour)
 - b) full details of species and growing medium;
 - c) full details of maintenance, including frequency and methods use;
 - d) full details of the irrigation system; and
 - e) full details of how failure of individual plants or troughs will be dealt with.

The planted living wall shall thereafter be implemented strictly in accordance with the agreed management strategy and maintained as such for a period of no less than 5 years. Following the installation of the planted living wall, any plants removed, dying, being severely damaged or becoming seriously diseased shall be replaced to match those originally planted in accordance with the management strategy so approved. At the end of the 5 year maintenance period, a further maintenance scheme shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: The ongoing maintenance of the planted living wall is essential to the success of the development given its proximity to adjacent listed buildings and its prominence within the wider conservation area in accordance with Local Plan Policies CP3 and CP7 relating to sustainable environment and design.

- 8 Prior to first use of the development, details of secure and covered cycle parking facilities for a minimum of two bicycles shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Prior to first occupation of the development, the cycle parking shall be completed in all respects and thereafter kept free of obstruction and available for the parking of cycles only.
- Reason: To ensure adequate cycle parking is provided in order to promote opportunities for sustainable transport modes in accordance with paragraph 35 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

15/01319/LBC

- 1 The works hereby granted consent shall be begun before the expiration of five years from the date of this consent.
- Reason: To accord with the provisions of Section 18 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
- 2 The development hereby granted consent shall be carried out in accordance with Drawing Nos. 1205(SK)043, 1205(SK)044, 1205(SK)045, 1205(SK)046, 1205(SK)047 and 1205(SK)048 received by the Local Planning Authority on 27th July 2015.
- Reason: To ensure the development is carried out in strict accordance with the approved drawings.

INFORMATIVE

15/01319/FUL

- 1 In accordance with the requirements of The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) (Amendment No. 2) Order 2012 and the provisions of the NPPF, the Local Planning Authority adopts a positive and proactive approach to dealing with planning applications and where possible, will seek solutions to any problems that arise when dealing with a planning application with the aim of fostering the delivery of sustainable development.

At the heart of this positive and proactive approach is the authority's pre-application advice service for all types of development. Further to this however, the authority publishes guidance on the Council's website on how to submit planning applications and provides full and up-to-date information in relation to planning applications to enable the applicant, and other interested parties, to track progress.

In this instance, having had regard to all material considerations, the application constitutes sustainable development and has therefore been approved in a timely manner.