
Committee Date:	15/05/2014	Application Number:	2014/00989/PA
Accepted:	12/03/2014	Application Type:	Full Planning
Target Date:	11/06/2014		
Ward:	Ladywood		

Lloyd House, West Midlands Police, 2 Colmore Circus Queensway, Birmingham, B4 6AT

Part change of use from offices (Use Class B1) to non-residential institutional use (Use Class D1) for a Local Policing Unit (LPU). External alterations including new ground floor and lower ground floor external reconfiguration, two new entrances, new windows throughout and installation of a new rooftop plant room and associated screening.

Applicant: West Midlands Police
Lloyd House, 2 Colmore Circus Queensway, Birmingham, B4 6AT
Agent: Associated Architects LLP
1 Severn Street Place, The Mailbox, Birmingham, B1 1SE

Recommendation

Approve Subject To Conditions

1. Proposal

1.1. This application is for part change of the lower ground and ground floor levels to a new Local Policing Unit (LPU) along with the refurbishment of the existing building. The LPU would provide local policing services for the central and western parts of the City Centre but would not include any custodial facilities. It is envisaged that the LPU would be open 24 hours a day, operating 3 shifts of 75 staff. It would occupy 1,065sqm (GIA) of the building which has a floor area of 18,120sqm (GIA). Within the building as whole, there are currently 650 staff, which following refurbishment would increase to 1,300 (including the 225 LPU staff).

Access and Parking

1.2. It is proposed that the existing main staff entrance off Colmore Circus would remain but the existing canopy and revolving door would be removed and a new entrance portico with sliding doors installed. The new entrance portico would have metallic cladding panels contrasting with glazing either side. External light channels are proposed set into the inner side reveals.

1.3. The new LPU would be located on Snow Hill Queensway at lower ground and ground floor levels. The existing colonnade along Snow Hill Queensway would be infilled to provide an additional 492sqm gross internal floor space and a new public entrance to the north of the site created. The design of the new LPU entrance would be similar to the new main staff entrance on Colmore Circus with a double height entrance portico framed with metallic panels. All other curtain walling components

within this and to either side of it would be contrasting matt black. A similar light channel would be built into the portico reveals to provide lighting levels.

- 1.4. The Police are in discussions with BCC Highways about taking 4 existing on street parking spaces on Weaman Street for their own use. Next to these a new staff entrance would be created at the northern end of Weaman Street for the LPU. Space within the entrance would be made available for the storage of 28 "pool" police bicycles.
- 1.5. Means of vehicular and cycle access to the mezzanine car park via a ramp off Weaman Street remains unchanged. Currently there are 58 car parking spaces but 4 car parking spaces are to be lost as part of a separate planning application for new chillers. In addition revised plans have been submitted to provide 30 cycle parking spaces.
- 1.6. Service vehicles would continue to use the access area off Weaman Street as existing. However, additional plant room and service area access points would be created off Weaman Street. These would comprise new matt black louvered doors within a new louvered screen.

Elevations and Rooftop Plant

- 1.7. The existing single glazed upper floor windows would be replaced with new matt black powder coated aluminium framed windows. As the building would incorporate new mechanical supply and extract ventilation the new windows would not need to be opened for natural ventilation. However, the windows would be divided into two so that they can be opened and turned, to allow cleaning from within the building. This division adds an additional vertical emphasis to the building, which is reinforced by new projecting mullions / curtain walling at lower floor levels along Snow Hill Queensway. A small number of windows would need to be blanked out, such as where there are new service risers.
- 1.8. The existing concrete cladding panels would be retained throughout the upper storeys and thermal dry lining carried out internally to upgrade the thermal performance of the building.
- 1.9. The newly refurbished offices would be fitted out with new mechanical and electrical services, which requires new roof top plant. To accommodate loading of the new roof top plant a new 600mm deep steel structure would be inserted on top of the roof. On top of this structure a 3m tall (originally 5.5m tall) polycarbonate panelled screen wall with louvers in light grey would be set around the building edge to enclose the new mechanical equipment and associated high level ductwork. A new perimeter handrail would also be provided just behind the existing parapets to provide full personnel safety.

[Location Plan](#)

[Proposed South West Elevation](#)

[Proposed South East Elevation](#)

2. Site & Surroundings

- 2.1. Lloyd House is a 1960's office building in use as the headquarters of the West Midlands Police. The building occupies a 69m by 30m rectangular plot with the

Weaman Street side of the upper floors set back to create an “L” shaped building with a colonnade along Snow Hill Queensway. It has eleven office floors above the ground floor, with an intermediate mezzanine level containing offices and car parking. The building is bounded by St. Chad’s Queensway to the north, Weaman Street to the east, Colmore Circus Queensway to the south and Snow Hill Queensway to the west.

- 2.2. The site is adjoined by a vacant 2 storey building to the north (known as “The Strip”) with planning consent for demolition of existing buildings and construction of a 15 storey office building; the former Post and Mail Printing Works redevelopment site to the east on the opposite side of Weaman Street; the Wesleyan Office building to the south on the opposite side of Colmore Circus; and 2 new office buildings on the opposite of Snow Hill Queensway to the west. The building is within the Snow Hill Business District.

[Site Location](#)

[Street View](#)

3. Planning History

- 3.1. Various minor alterations to the building including external alterations to the recruitment assessment centre and installation of an external boiler flue approved in 2002 and 2004 respectively.
- 3.2. 16 March 2012. Application 2011/01322/PA. Planning consent granted (part detailed and part outline for (phase 1) redevelopment involving partial demolition of the former Post and Mail printing works to street level, the insertion of new levels into the existing basement to create a new car park for up to 800 spaces, with a new two storey building above for retail restaurant and office uses. Part outline application for Phase 2 comprising multi storey building (minimum height of 170m above ordnance datum up to a maximum of 205m above ordnance datum) above Phase 1 for restaurant, office, hotel, residential and non-residential institution uses. Consent subject to a S106 agreement to secure local employment provisions and £42,500 toward affordable housing and / or public transport.
- 3.3. 21 March 2014. Application 2014/00485/PA. Planning consent granted for erection of louvered services enclosure for new chillers on mezzanine deck level at Lloyd House.
- 3.4. 31 March 2014. Application 2013/09446/PA. Planning consent granted for demolition of existing building and construction of 15 storey office building (Use Class B1) with basement parking and associated public realm works at 39 Snow Hill Queensway. Consent subject to a S106 agreement to secure £225,000 toward public transport improvements and £40,000 toward local employment.

4. Consultation/PP Responses

- 4.1. BCC Transportation Development – further information required. Cycle parking is shown on the ground floor accessed from Weaman Street but this appears to be for pool bikes and there should be some provision for the rest of the office, i.e. general staff cycle parking. The new ground floor entrance lobby extends beyond the current building line onto public highway and this would need to be formally stopped up. The Design and Access Statement notes changes to Weaman Street parking provision is being discussed with BCC Highways. These changes are not directly linked to this

planning application but the applicant would need to enter into a S278 Highways Agreement to progress these changes at their expense, and cover the cost of lost revenue from the existing on-street pay and display spaces.

4.2. BCC Regulatory Services - the development can be implemented without significant adverse impact. The Design and Access statement indicates that appropriate kitchen extraction system would be installed. The noise report does not have the benefit of specific equipment and therefore a condition is required to ensure noise levels are acceptable. They also recommend that the emergency generator should have its own conditions.

4.3. Adjoining occupiers, residents associations, local ward councillors, M.P. and Colmore BID notified. Site and Press notices displayed. One letter received from developers of the former Post and Mail Printing Works on the opposite side of Weaman Street commenting that:-

- Public Realm – there is no reference to the public realm in the vicinity of Lloyd House. There are clear aspirations that have been widely debated for this part of the city. The emerging Snow Hill Master plan further reinforces the importance of linkages and routes. More specifically:
 - Extensive improvements have taken place around 1 and 2 Snow Hill as well as Colmore Plaza. Further improvements are planned as part of 3 Snow Hill. Major improvements to the public realm are being undertaken as part of the Metro Extension. The proposed office development next to Lloyd House includes significant public realm works as part of their consent including a pedestrian link from Snow Hill Queensway to Weaman Street. As part of the consent for Post & Mail they are constructing a new pedestrian route linking Weaman Street to Printing House Street. It is strange that the “last piece of the jigsaw” around Lloyd House is not being addressed as part of this planning application.
 - The linkage in front of Lloyd House from 1 Snow hill to Weaman Street is a critical route that appears to have been ignored. Given the extensive works proposed that include the reclaiming of an existing pedestrian route running along the Queensway elevation they would have expected appropriate works to the public realm to be an integral part of the scheme proposals.
 - It is important that Lloyd House and the area around it fits into the character of the buildings in the vicinity which all provide high quality offices as part of the Snow Hill Business District. They accept security is important but this should not result in “fortified defences” around the building changing the open pedestrian friendly environment and public realm.
- Car Parking on Weaman Street - the planning application identifies the intent to change 4 on street parking spaces on Weaman Street that are presently for public use and for these to be dedicated for police cars only. They have no objection to this as long as the layout and position of the spaces do not change as the free flow of traffic both ways along Weaman Street is critical to the operation of their car park.

- Construction Impact on Post & Mail - it is vital to the operation of the car park that Weaman Street is accessible to allow the car park to operate.
- External Appearance - Lloyd House is over 50 years old and the external fabric has seen little change and little expenditure over the years. The elevational treatment involving the replacement of the windows and improved thermal insulation (internally) would leave the building looking little different and it is surprising an appropriate improvement to the external appearance of the cladding has not been proposed.
- Plant enclosure on the roof (design, noise and odour) - the plant enclosure on the roof would be close to the residential accommodation proposed at high level as part of the redevelopment of the Post & Mail building. This presents potential issues in terms of noise, odour and the visual appearance.

5. Policy Context

- 5.1. Birmingham UDP 2005; Draft Birmingham Plan 2031; Places for All SPG, Access for People with Disabilities SPD and National Planning Policy Framework.

6. Planning Considerations

Background and Land Use Policy

- 6.1. The Police have undertaken a review of their Central Estate and have concluded that Lloyd House is currently under-utilised and they therefore propose to modernise and refurbish the building. This would include an increase in occupancy levels within the building to allow the Force to release three administrative buildings in line with their lease end dates of March 2015 and July 2015 respectively. This opportunity to modernise the Central Estate is recognised as a major catalyst and enabler to the transformation of the Force's working practices and they are embarking on the refurbishment of Lloyd House to support flexible and agile working practices. The refurbishment will also include within Lloyd House a new Central Birmingham Police Station, allowing for the current site at Steelhouse Lane to be disposed of.
- 6.2. In land use planning terms the proposal is consistent with the UDP, which supports office activity and growth, particularly in the City Centre. It is also consistent with the Big City Plan and policy GA1 of the emerging Development Plan, which both envisage growth in the provision of high quality office space within the city centre and the Snow Hill District as the natural extension to the Business District.
- 6.3. Although the LPU would result in the loss of some office floor space, it would provide activity at ground floor level and compliment the office use above. It would also be very well served by public transport being close to numerous bus services, Snow Hill railway station and the proposed Midland Metro stop at Bull Street. In principle therefore I have no objections to the proposed LPU.

External Alterations and Public Realm

- 6.4. Following submission of the application revised plans have been submitted to reduce the height of the roof top plant from 5.5m to 3m, thereby reducing the dominance of the roof top plant screen. The main entrance portico has also been redesigned to reduce the extent of the projection and glazing introduced on the sides to give a more welcoming and transparent appearance. Whilst it is proposed to

replace the glazing to the upper floors, it is disappointing that it is not proposed to externally re-clad the building. I understand there have been several attempts using different methodologies to clean the building (e.g. jet washing and chemical cleaning) but none have proved fruitful and the overall appearance of the building would therefore only be partly improved. This is particularly unfortunate given the site's location on the Central Business District, and other significant investment in new development close by. This building will continue to have a tired look.

- 6.5. It is also disappointing that the applicant is not proposing to upgrade the public realm around the building so that it fits in with the nearby high quality office developments. This is particularly the case as the Big City Plan identifies the area in front of Lloyd House from 1 Snow Hill to Weaman Street as a primary walking route. I therefore share the concerns raised by the developers of the nearby Post and Mail.

Impact on Adjoining Occupiers

- 6.6. The nearest residential accommodation could potentially be on the upper floors of the Post and Mail development on the opposite side of Weaman Street. The visitor entrance to the LPU would be on Snow Hill Queensway and the comings and goings of visitors would therefore unlikely cause a nuisance to these prospective residents. Whilst, there may be some additional noise and disturbance from the increased number of staff working in the building, I do not consider that this would be significant to warrant refusal on these grounds.
- 6.7. As recommended by BCC Regulatory Services conditions are attached to control noise from plant and machinery. In addition I consider it reasonable to attach a condition requiring details of fume extraction equipment to ensure that kitchen cooking smells do not cause a nuisance.

Access and Parking

- 6.8. In response to the comments from BCC Transportation Development, revised plans have been submitted with additional cycle parking for staff provided and the main entrance portico set back so as not to extend over the public highway.
- 6.9. As the proposal does not include any public realm improvements it is not necessary to attach a S278 Highways condition. The Police are aware that should they require the 4 on street parking spaces they would need to progress a separate Highways Agreement. It is not therefore currently proposed to change the position of these spaces or vehicular access arrangements on to Weaman Street.

7. Conclusion

- 7.1. I have no objections to the change of use of the ground floor levels to a Local Police Unit. In its revised form the alterations to the external appearance of the building and addition of a roof top plant are acceptable and details of materials have been submitted negating the need for a condition requiring samples of materials to be submitted. However, it is disappointing that the external refurbishment works are not more extensive and essentially leave most of the exterior of the building as is, or that there are no proposals to enhance the public realm. On balance, given that the other elements of the scheme are acceptable the application is recommended for approval subject to conditions to safeguard the amenities of nearby occupiers.

8. Recommendation

8.1. Approve subject to conditions

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- 1 Requires the scheme to be in accordance with the listed approved plans
 - 2 Limits the noise levels for Plant and Machinery
 - 3 Limits Use of the Emergency Generator
 - 4 Requires the provision of cycle parking prior to occupation
 - 5 Requires the prior submission of extraction and odour control details
 - 6 Limits the approval to 3 years (Full)
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Case Officer: David Wells

Photo(s)

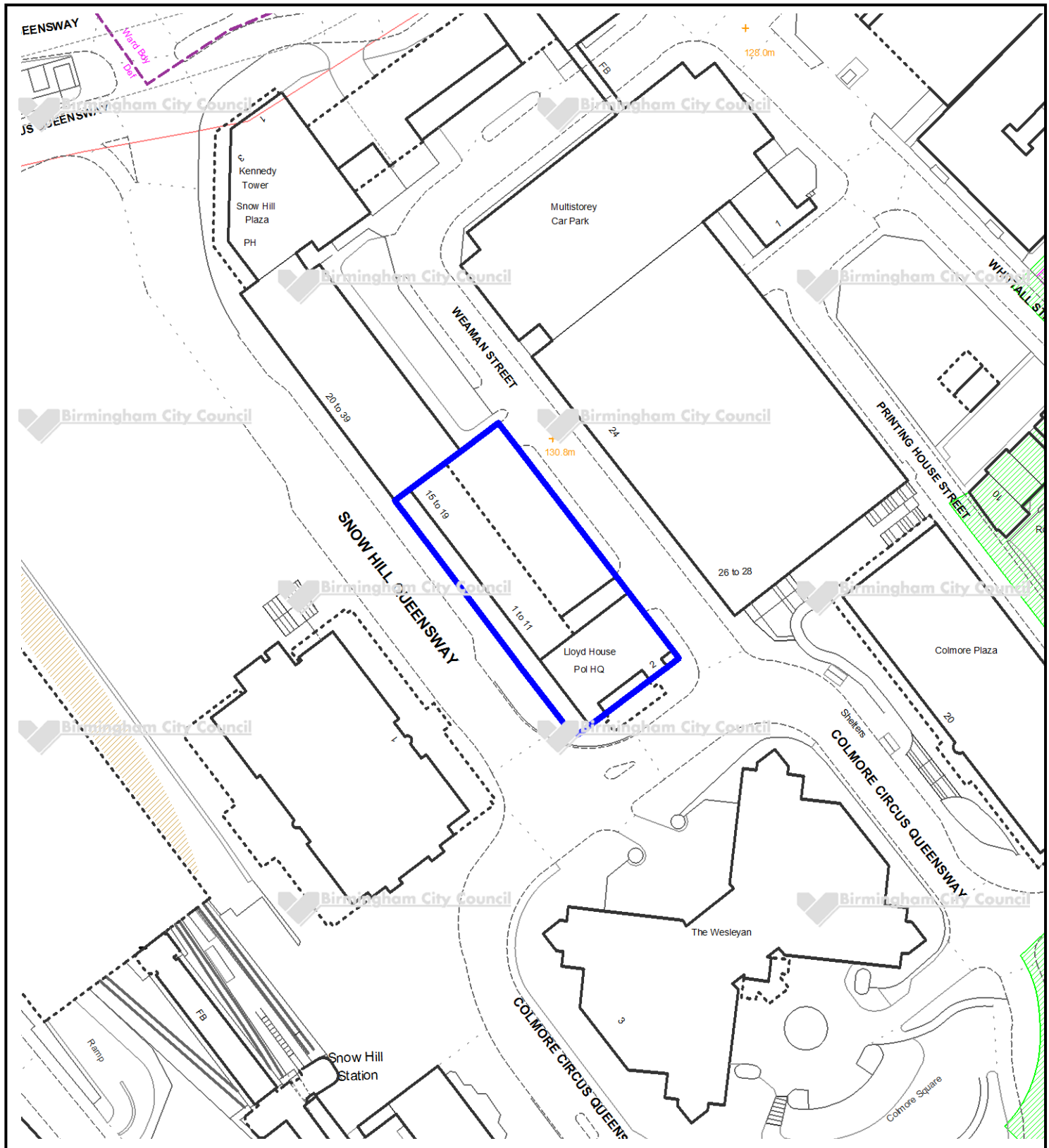


View along Colmore Circus



View along Snow Hill Queensway

Location Plan



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