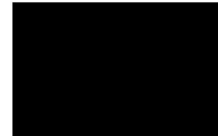




NTA PLANNING LLP  
TOWN PLANNING CONSULTANTS



Ms Miriam Baptist  
London Borough of Camden 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Planning Advice and Information Service (Camden Council)  
5 Pancras Square  
c/o Town Hall, Judd Street  
WC1H 9JE

Our Ref: 1185  
20<sup>th</sup> March 2023

Dear Ms Baptist,

**125 FINCHLEY ROAD, NW3 6HY**  
**YOUR REFERENCE: 2022/5492/P**

We write in regard to the above planning application for which we are acting as planning consultant/agent. We note that several letters of representation have been received from some local neighbours. We would like to take this opportunity to address the comments raised to date, focusing principally on those comments that are material planning considerations. The letters of representation raise several matters, summarised as follows:

1. Use of the terrace
2. Plant location and noise
3. Trees/hedging
4. Design of the façade

#### **1. Use of the Terrace**

Some of the letters of representation query the potential use of the terrace.

London Plan Policy D3 states that sites should be optimised through design-led approach. Experience plays a major role in optimising sites across London, with the policy stating that development should *'achieve indoor and outdoor environments that are comfortable and inviting for people to use'*.

We confirm that the terrace will be used only as ancillary to the existing office space, and would ensure that the site is optimised for prospective tenants.

The applicant's only intention is to provide improved office space. Many office workers have become accustomed to working either wholly or partially from home. The office environment must now accommodate workers used to a certain level of amenity, and the applicant seeks the provision of external space which would not only improve the workers' wellbeing but also ensure the building is as attractive as possible to prospective tenants.

Through the provision of the terrace, the applicants are seeking to achieve 'WELL Certification', which is strongly supported by the British Council for Offices' (BCO). The WELL Building Standard is a vehicle for buildings to deliver more thoughtful and intentional spaces that enhance human health and well-being. It includes strategies that aim to advance health by setting performance standards for design interventions and a commitment to fostering a culture of health and wellness. Enhanced fresh air supply and no recycled air, ensuring better air quality, internal and external planting, extensive use of natural light, and careful selection and procurement of furniture, fixture and finishes are just some of the many ways which go towards achieving WELL standards.

Providing outdoor amenity space is a great way to boost mental health and allows office workers the wellness benefits of natural light and greenery, which should be strongly encouraged. Finchley Road is also a busy, well trafficked road. The provision of the external amenity to the rear of the building will also improve office workers access to better air quality, further improving workers wellness.

Some of the letters have suggested that there will be potential for smoking on the terrace.

Smoking and vaping in the workplace is prohibited, by law, in the UK. The terrace will be an extension of the indoor office space, and there will be no smoking whatsoever on the terrace. This will be enforced by the applicants in any lease. Smokers will need to go down to the Finchley Road to smoke, in line with the existing arrangement. The proposal will not result in an increase of smokers or subject any additional residential units to cigarette smoke.

The proposal does not include provision for cooking or hospitality equipment, and the applicants are not applying for a restaurant/bar. There is no intention to use the office or the associated terrace as anything other than office space.

The applicant is conscious of potential noise from people using the terrace. It should be noted that the terrace will be **limited to a capacity of up to 20 persons at any one time**. This is a requirement that is to be enforced by the applicant through any lease provided to tenants. Notwithstanding this, in acknowledgement of comments raised by some nearby occupiers, the applicant is happy to limit the usable hours of the terrace, **restricting the use from 8am to 8pm, secured by way of a planning condition**.

Finally, some concerns were also raised regarding the two-door access to the terrace and that this would increase the use of the terrace. We reiterate that there will be no more than 20 people on the terrace at one time, regardless of how many access points there are. The reason for the two-door access is a fire regulations requirement, serving two direct means of escape from the terrace. The second door is therefore a safety requirement and ensures the safety of everyone on the terrace in the event of an emergency.

## **2. Plant Location and noise**

Comments are also raised with the location of the proposed plant and machinery.

It should be noted that there are currently a number of condensers across the roof at first floor, that do not feature any noise attenuation. The plant proposed in this scheme will replace those existing units and are to be enclosed within an appropriate acoustic enclosure to prevent noise disturbance. The proposals will actually improve and protect the amenity of the nearby occupiers.

A plant noise assessment has been undertaken by KP Acoustics, submitted as part of the application. The assessment has identified the closest noise sensitive receivers to the proposed installation location. This includes the residential units from 3<sup>rd</sup> floor and above within the application site. Background noise levels have been accurately measured to emission criteria for all proposed plant units in accordance with Camden's policy requirements.

In terms of location, the plant is located on the first floor due to ease of access to this level, allowing maintenance of the equipment etc. In line with the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015, the applicant has reviewed the maintenance of the plant and the design team have chosen the proposed location to reduce risk and improve health and safety.

It should be further noted that the commercial office space only has ownership of the ground, first and second floors. Accordingly, the plant could only be (re)located within the demised space.

We will be issuing an amended Noise Impact Assessment, to straighten up any typos that have been noted.

### **3. Trees/Hedging**

Some of the letters raise concern with the potential height of new planting proposed, and the potential for safety/security implications.

The applicant assures that planting will be no higher than c.2m and will not enable climbing access to the residential floors above. As such, fears of potential burglaries resulting from persons climbing the planting will not arise. Furthermore, given that the office space accommodates both first *and* second floor, the first-floor terrace sits approximately 8.1m below the nearest residential terrace above. It is frankly impossible that the proposed planting would grow to this height.

Furthermore, the low-level planting proposed will not grow to a height that would obstruct views from the residential units above. Should officers consider it necessary, the applicants are happy to accept a landscaping and/or landscape management plan condition.

### **4. Design of the façade**

Finally, with regard to the comments regarding the design of the façades, we disagree that this will be to the detriment of the host building.

The fenestration changes at the ground floor entrance will provide a cleaner, more legible entrance and in our view provide an improvement to the host building. With regard to the replacement windows on the upper levels, these will simply bring windows slightly further forward than existing, resulting in a cleaner façade. The window style/design will be consistent with the existing. The removal of the deep recesses will also improve the quality and amount of light received within the office.

The relocation of the windows will also remove the deep recesses which currently result in significant pigeon activity and associated disturbance /droppings below.

To the rear, the fenestration changes at the terrace level are also considered to complement the existing host building and will allow additional light to serve the office space.

We trust that the above responses are clear and address the comments raised to date. However, should you have any questions or require anything further please do let me know.

Kind regards,



**LUKE CAMPBELL**  
PLANNER  
NTA PLANNING LLP