



45 Welbeck Street
London W1G 8DZ
020 3409 7755
info@hghconsulting.com
hghconsulting.com

Planning Services
London Borough of Camden
5 Pancras Square
London
N1C 4AG

Via Planning Portal

May 2023

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Full planning and listed building consent for change of use from Class E to a dual use of Class F1 or Class E at 1 Southampton Place, Camden, London, WC1A 2DA.

On behalf of the client, Knight Frank Asset Management, please find enclosed an application for full planning and listed planning consent for the change of use from Class E to a dual use of Class F1 or Class E at 1 Southampton Place, Camden, London, WC1A 2DA.

The application comprises the following material, submitted via the Planning Portal (ref: PP-12133659).

- Completed application form;
- A Site Location Plan; and
- Existing and Proposed Floor Plans.

The application is a resubmission of the recently refused planning application for the same description of development. There is no planning application fee associated with this application as it is a resubmission without any major changes to the scheme within a year of receiving the previous decision.

Background

The Site comprises 1 Southampton Place, which is part of a terrace of townhouses featured with darkened multi-coloured stock brick with a stone band at 1st floor level that date from circa 1758-1763. 1 Southampton Place achieves a height of up to 4 storeys. The Site is part of the wider Holborn Links Estate and is current vacant. Figure 1 below outlines the boundary of the Holborn Links Estate in blue and 1 Southampton Place in red indicating the Site's location in the context of the Estate.



Figure 1: Holborn Links Estate outlined in Blue and the Site (1 Southampton Place) outlined in red.

The surrounding area comprises a range of uses including commercial, education, residential, retail and restaurants. Bloomsbury Square Garden and the British Museum is situated to the northwest of the Site.

The Site falls within the Central Activities Zone (CAZ), the Bloomsbury Conservation Area and is a Grade II* statutorily listed building, as identified by Historic England. The Site has an excellent Public Transport Accessibility Level (PTAL) of 6b (6b being the best), with Holborn underground station being a 2-minute walk away and multiple bus services available within vicinity of the Site.

Planning History

The most recent planning history includes the change of use from office (Class E (g) (i)) to education (Class F1 (a)) (ref: 2023/0802/P), which was recently refused on the 27th April 2023 for the following reason:

The proposed development would result in the loss of employment floorspace which (without marketing evidence to the contrary) is considered to remain suitable for use. It would fail to support economic activity in Camden, particularly small and medium sized businesses and would result in the loss of employment opportunities within the Borough contrary to policy E2 (Employment premises and sites) of the Camden Local Plan 2017.

Other recent planning history of the site includes the following:

- The installation of 9 external LED surface mounted lighting fixtures and 7 polished brass signage plates at the entrances to 1 Southampton Place, 18-23 Southampton Place and 46-47 Bloomsbury Square, with the decision still pending (ref: 2022/3747/A, 2022/3744/L, 2022/2141/P).

- External and internal repair, replacement, cleaning and maintenance at 1 Southampton Place and 18-19 Southampton Place, with the decision still pending (ref: 2022/1811/L).

Older planning history including alterations to the building pre-dates 1992 and is available on the Council's planning register.

Planning Performance Agreement

As stated above the Site is part of the wider Holborn Links Estate which is subject to a Planning Performance Agreement (PPA) and subsequently every application should be considered in the context of the wider estate.

The Proposal

The full planning application and listed building consent seeks permission for:

“Change of use from Class E to a dual use of Class F1 or Class E.”

Planning permission is sought to accommodate dual use of Class F1 or Class E use at 1 Southampton Place. As previously stated, the property is currently vacant and has been so since early July 2021, approximately 2 years, and CATS Education have signed a lease with Knight Frank Asset Management to occupy the building once planning permission is granted (i.e., subject to planning).

The permission will provide CATS Education with much needed and required learning space and classrooms. It should be noted the CATS Education is the only meaningful interest the property has had during the whole 2-year vacancy period. CATS Education also have one of their operators in 2 Southampton Place, which directly neighbours the property.

No external or internal alterations are being proposed to the building as part of this application.

Planning Policy Assessment

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2000 requires that proposal be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The adopted development plan comprises Camden Local Plan (2017), Camden Policies Map (2021), and the London Plan (2021). The Council is in early stages of preparing a new Local Plan, with the consultation of call for sites currently open. Other material considerations include the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2021).

Principle of Development

The principle of the change of use from Class E to Class F1 or Class E is initially intended to accommodate educational use for the future occupiers (CATS Education) but with flexibility should a commercial occupier then express a later interest. Educational use is supported by local policy with Local Plan Policy E1 “Economic development” encouraging the development of Camden’s education sectors and recognising the importance of other employment generating uses such as education. This is specifically set out in supporting text Policy E1 paragraph 5.33. Employment, in the form of teaching, will still be retained at the Site and therefore the proposal will not result in a complete loss of employment. Also, the principle of educational use has already been established at neighbouring 2 Southampton Place, which is too currently occupied by CATS Education. Additionally, the flexible



proposed use of Class E is also an employment generating use and will also not result in a loss of employment on the Site.

London Plan Policy S3 “Education and childcare facilities” further supports educational development appreciating its importance, especially within accessible locations, with good PTAL and access by walking and cycling, and next to green spaces where possible. Additionally, paragraph 106 in the NPPF seeks to support an appropriate mix of uses across an area ensuring minimal journey times to educational uses. The Site has an excellent PTAL rating making it very accessible and sustainable to travel to, meeting criteria within the London Plan and NPPF. Bloomsbury Square Garden is also located directly north of the Site providing a green space for students and teachers to break from work.

Marketing

1 Southampton Place has been vacant, and available to let, since its last occupier vacated at the beginning of July 2021. No interest has been taken in the property from any businesses, other than CATS Education, who also occupy 2 Southampton Place. CATS Education made initial inquiries into the property in August 2022 and agreed a lease, subject to planning, in May 2023 to become occupiers.

Notwithstanding the proof of vacancy, there are a number of subsequent benefits of this proposal including positively supporting the local economy and contributing towards general activity to the area. The Site is also located within the Knowledge Quarter, where the Council supports educational institutions recognising this use as an integral part to the area sustaining and promoting the functions of the CAZ. Again, the Council should acknowledge there will be no complete loss of employment on this Site with the proposed Class F1 or Class E use providing a level of employment, as recognised in adopted Policy E1 referenced above.

As part of the wider Holborn Links Estate there are number of changes of uses from education use to flexible education or commercial and service use being sought for at properties 18-19 Southampton Place, 20-21 Southampton Place and 46-47 Bloomsbury Square. This is evidenced at planning application refs. 2021/5685/P, 2023/0223/P, and 2023/0224/P.

Therefore, when this proposal is viewed as a whole in context of the wider estate, it effectively rebalances any perceived loss of educational use within the surrounding area.

Overall, the proposal provides much needed educational space for the CATS Education, which is an appropriate form of development neighbouring 2 Southampton Place. Employment will importantly be retained at the Site in a highly sustainable and accessible location, maintaining the surrounding area’s vibrant activity.

Heritage

The Site is a Grade II* listed property within Bloomsbury Conservation Area. This application does not propose external or internal alterations to the property, and it is considered educational use is appropriate within the historic property. Additionally, the proposal is limited to the change of use only and the proposed occupier is under strict orders to protect the historic fabric. Therefore, the heritage status and quality of the building is maintained and protected.

CATS Education have expressed the importance to be located at 1 Southampton Place, which is both desirable and complementary to the look and the feel of their current school at 2 Southampton Place. This application is a key part of their plan to retain the building. Additionally, they will not be adding any signage or branding to the



building as their main entrance and reception will continue to be located at 2 Southampton Place. The use of 1 Southampton Place will be exclusively for additional classrooms and some space for faculty.

As such, the proposal is in keeping with London Plan Policy HC1 “Heritage conservation and growth” and Local Plan Policy D1 “Design” and Policy D2 “Heritage”, protecting and preserving the elements of historic significance.

Therefore, the property will continue to contribute positively to the historic character of the site and the surrounding conservation area. The proposal is considered to adhere to the legislative requirements of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Conclusion

In keeping with national, regional, and local policy and guidance, the proposed change of use from office to education is considered an appropriate use of the Site, meeting current needs by CATS Education. The proposal maintains employment use at the Site, evidenced with sufficient marketing information, and protects its historic significance.

We trust you have everything required to validate and determine this application within the statutory time frame. Should you wish to discuss any aspect of this application, please do not hesitate to contact myself or my colleague Ross Williamson.

Yours sincerely

Rose Adams
Planner