



Camden Council
Planning – Development Control,
Camden Town Hall,
London,
WC2H 8ND

23 May 2023

Dear Sir/Madam,

17-21 CAMDEN ROAD, LONDON, NW1 9LJ – ADDITIONAL MECHANICAL PLANT

On behalf of Sainsbury's Supermarkets Limited (SSL), please find enclosed an application for full planning permission and listed building consent for:

“Replacement of rooftop plant machinery, erection of steel gantry for additional mechanical plant and associated works”

In addition to this covering letter, we submit the following documents as part of this application:

- Application forms;
- CIL Form;
- Cover letter;
- Site Location Plan (drawing ref. PL-A-2001);
- Existing Site Plan (drawing ref. PL-A-2002);
- Proposed Site Plan (drawing ref. PL-A-2003);
- Existing Roof Plan (drawing ref. PL-A-2004);
- Proposed Roof Plan (drawing ref. PL-A-2005);
- Existing Elevations (drawing ref. PL-A-2006);
- Proposed Elevations (drawing ref. PL-A-2007);
- Proposed LFE Gantry Detail (drawing ref. PL-A-2008);
- Proposed Gantry Plan and Elevations (drawing ref. PL-A-2009);
- New Plant Gantry at Service Yard (drawing ref. GDP-Z01-02-SK-S-2803);
- Plant Deck Steelwork Layout (drawing ref. GDP-Z01-02-SK-S-2808);
- Refrigeration Plant Layout drawing ref. SDG3_2127_0194_B); and
- Noise Impact Assessment.

The requisite planning application fee of £462 has been paid via the Planning Portal for the London Borough of Camden (Planning Portal ref. PP-12168998).

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

The application site comprises the existing Sainsbury's store on Camden Road within the London Borough of Camden. The site is Grade II listed and is an architecturally significant building, designed by Nicholas Grimshaw and is the first purpose-built supermarket to achieve National Heritage status in England.

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

This planning application is seeking full planning permission and listed building consent for:

“Replacement of rooftop plant machinery, erection of steel gantry for additional mechanical plant and associated works”

The proposed works include the following:

- 20 Gas Coolers/Condensers (on existing roof);
- 7.2m x 10.07m Plant Deck (to support the coolers/condensers);
- 4 False Load Evaporators (on proposed gantry); and
- 14.12m x 10.03m Steel Gantry in the north-west corner of the site;
- A new access door at first floor level onto the gantry.

The proposals will require the construction of a new steel gantry and a gantry access door in the north-west corner of the site to accommodate the new steel gantry. The gantry has been designed sympathetically that it matches the character and appearance of the listed building. The gantry will be clad in perforated aluminium cladding, powder coated to match the existing cladding.

The new gantry is required because the existing roof structure will not support the weight of both the replacement gas coolers plus the new false load evaporators and no other location on site is suitable for the machinery. As space on site is limited the gantry solution, within the existing service yard, was found to be the most practical, albeit the gantry needs to be high enough to allow service vehicles to pass underneath it, although it will be no higher than the existing building.

The gantry would be independently supported on columns which would be fixed to the service yard slab.

The new and replacement mechanical plant is more energy efficient and would reduce greenhouse gas emissions compared to conventional systems such as the existing plant on site.

STATUTORY DESIGNATIONS

The Camden Policies Map (2021) shows that the site is subject to the following planning designations:

- The Site is located within Regent’s Canal Conservation area; and
- Includes a protected frontage.

The application building is Grade II listed and lies immediately adjacent to the Church of St Michaels (Grade II listed) and the War Memorial at the Church of St Michaels (Grade II listed). To the north of the Site lies 1-12 Grand Union Walk (Grade II listed), and opposite lies 18-62 Camden Road (Grade II listed).

PLANNING HISTORY

Set out below is a list of relevant planning applications at the site in regards to the existing supermarket.

- On the 3 April 1985, outline planning permission was granted for the redevelopment of the land known as the ABC Bakery site (17-21 Camden Road, 131-147 Camden Street, Camden Gardens, and frontage onto Kentish Town Road NW1) by the erection of a retail store with associated creche (LPA Ref. 8401869);
- On the 21 October 1986, full planning permission was granted for six structural-support members on the public highway (LPA Ref. 8601494);
- On the 21 November 1990, planning permission was granted for change of use of part of the shop unit from A1 retail to mixed use of art gallery/café (LPA ref. 9003222);

- On the 5 June 1991, full planning permission was granted for the installation of a new shopfront to Unit One (LPA ref. 9003444);
- On 5 May 1992, full planning permission was granted for the erection of a first-floor rear extension to the bulk stock warehouse area (LPA ref. 9200430);
- On the 21 August 2007, full planning permission was granted for the alterations to front and rear elevations to enlarge the two main entrance doors and to relocate an internal ATM to an external wall (LPA ref. 2007/2868/P);
- On 26 November 2007, full planning permission was granted to install a second ATM facility and further minor alterations to the existing entrance (LPA ref. 2007/4906/P); and
- On 27 August 2021, full planning permission and listed building consent was granted for internal alterations to the listed building and installation of new plant and associated equipment (LPA ref. 2021/2594/P and 2021/2594/P).

PLANNING POLICY

Below is a review of the relevant planning policies to this application.

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2021) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.

Paragraph 10 states that at the heart of the NPPF is the presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should be seen as the golden thread running through both plan-making and decision-taking.

Paragraph 11 states that for decision-taking, applying a presumption in favour of sustainable development means approving the development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay.

Paragraph 126 states good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.

Paragraph 174 of the NPPF relates to conserving the natural environment, and states that planning decisions should prevent new development from contributing to unacceptable levels of noise pollution.

Paragraph 185 states that planning policies and decisions should mitigate and reduce to minimum potential adverse impacts resulting from noise from new development and avoid noise giving rise to significant adverse impacts on health and quality of life.

Paragraph 194 states that in determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance.

Paragraph 206 states that local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites, and within the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably.

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The Development Plan for the purpose of the determination of this planning application comprise of the Camden Local Plan (2017) and the London Plan (2021). The key policies are set out below.

The Camden Local Plan (2017)

- Policy E1 Economic development;
- Policy E2 Employment premises and sites;
- Policy D1 Design;
- Policy D2 Heritage;
- Policy A4 Noise and vibration; and
- Policy CC4 Air Quality;

The London Plan (2021)

- Policy GG1 Building strong and inclusive communities;
- Policy GG5 Growing a good economy;
- Policy D1 London's form, character and capacity for growth;
- Policy D4 Delivering good design;
- Policy HC1 Heritage conservation and growth;
- Policy SI1 Improving air quality; and
- Policy D14 Noise.

Other Material Considerations

The following Camden Planning Guidance (CPG's) are also relevant to this application:

- Air Quality CPG;
- Design CPG;
- Employment Sites & Business Premises CPG; and
- Energy efficiency and adaptation CPG.

KEY PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPMENT

The existing Sainsbury's store has a long history of trading as a successful supermarket following the original planning approval in 1985 as mentioned above. However, for the supermarket to operate safely and successfully, the existing plant equipment needs to be replaced. The plant machinery to be installed at roof level will include 20 gas coolers/condensers. In addition, 4 false load evaporators are proposed on a new steel gantry that will be built within part of the existing service yard. This is supported by Policy E1 and E2 of the Camden Local Plan (2017), and London Plan (2021) Policy GG5.

DESIGN

The design of the plant machinery and gantry are of high quality and relevant safety standards. The design of the gantry in particular has been sensitively designed to ensure it fits in with the architectural appearance of the listed supermarket building, both in its form and design, as well as in terms of materials.

Paragraph 126 of the NPPF is clear in its direction that the creation of high-quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve, and that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development and creating better places in which to live and work.

Local Plan Policy D1 sets out that the council will seek to secure high quality design in development and will require that development respects local context and character, preserves or enhances heritage assets, improves movement through the site.

London Plan Policy D4 states that the quality of all developments should be retained by ensuring maximum detail appropriate for design stage is provided, effective planning controls and avoiding deferring of assessment of design quality to later in the process.

The siting of the plant equipment and the design of the gantry has been strongly guided by policy considerations and efforts have been made to ensure that the proposals respect the local context and character as well as preserving the importance of the heritage asset. Sufficient detail is provided within the submission to assess the design quality and therefore the proposals accord with policy D1 of the Local Plan and D4 of the London Plan.

HERITAGE ASSESSMENT

17-21 CAMDEN ROAD SIGNIFICANCE

The existing building is part of the Grand Union Complex built 1986-88, designed by Sir Nicholas Grimshaw, and is the first purpose-built supermarket to achieve national listing status in England.

J Sainsbury took ownership of the site in the early 1980s with the intention to develop an urban supermarket and the scope was revised to also include a terrace of houses (1-12 Grand Union Walk, listed Grade II), and a commercial building (known as Grand Union House).

The architectural significance of the listed building is principally expressed in its 'High-Tech' architectural style, which centres on revealing the construction techniques used, rather than hiding them away and integrates an overtly modern aesthetic into Camden's historic urban grain. Furthermore, the building features a technological innovation with its intumescent coating, which allows the steel frame to be left exposed. The building is a distinctive landmark within a dense urban setting. The design of the exterior of the building includes the display of its structure, and a glazed shopfront revealing the retail activity within. The building materials comprise of an exposed steel frame with aluminium and glass cladding. Its historic significance relates to the historic context of its construction during this period and for a building of this type.

Historic England's National Heritage List for England describes the reason for designation as being:

Architectural interest

'As a powerful piece of contextual inner-city High-Tech, integrating an overtly modern aesthetic into Camden's historic urban grain; in the creative use of structure to meet a challenging brief, boldly and exaggeratedly expressed to striking effect; in the technological innovation of its intumescent coating, allowing the frame to be left exposed in a densely developed environment; as a resourceful piece of retail planning which successfully meets the complex, space-hungry demands of a supermarket on a tight urban site; as the centrepiece of a successful mixed-use scheme which marked a turning point in the career of Nicholas Grimshaw, one of the country's leading proponents of High-Tech architecture.'

Historic interest

‘As a rare example of the important but typically mundane post-war building type, the supermarket, being designed as a highly original, bespoke piece of architecture; a project made possible by the ambition of the architects, the client and the local authority.’

IMPACT OF THE PROPOSED SCHEME

The proposed gantry for the plant would be located in the service area of the building, which is already characterised by its functional use and does not possess the architectural quality of the principal elevations. Nonetheless the proposed gantry has been designed to accord with, and therefore not harm, the architectural style of the building, which as noted above is key to its significance, this includes in the use of materials and in the overall design and form which relates to the appearance of this part of the building. The gantry is designed to hide the plant equipment and so there will be no additional impact from this. In terms of the new plant on the main roof, this replaces existing and will similarly be partially visible above the main roof and so likewise there is no additional impact.

REGENTS CANAL CONSERVATION AREA SIGNIFICANCE

The special character and appearance of the Conservation Area is largely derived from the almost hidden nature of the canal. The surrounding townscape largely turns its back on the canal creating a tranquil space distinct from the business of the surrounding city. This character has in part arisen from the topography of the canal located as it is in shallow cuttings along part of its length and partly as a result of canal side development forming an effective barrier, cutting off views towards the canal. Many of the industrial buildings and structures include interesting architectural details and fine examples of industrial brickwork, illustrating styles of engineering and construction techniques of the 19th and early 20th centuries; some building materials were produced in London and others brought in by the railways from the regions.

IMPACT OF THE PROPOSED SCHEME

Given the industrial style of the proposed gantry, which, as noted above, accords with both the building and also the character and appearance of the conservation area, coupled with the limited visibility between the area of the proposed works and the canal due to the existing buildings which enclose the canal and separate the two, it is not felt that the proposals would have any impact on the significance or character and appearance of the conservation area.

SETTING OF LISTED BUILDINGS

The site is near to a number of other listed buildings, those most relevant to the location of these proposals are discussed below.

St Michaels Church

Immediately adjacent to the site on the western side, lies the Church of St Michael, which is Grade II* listed. St Michael's Church is of a Gothic Revival style, designed in 1878 by the influential architect, G. F. Bodley. It is an outstanding late Gothic Revival building by one of the most important Victorian and Edwardian church architects of the time.

The setting of the Church to the North and East has changed with the construction of the application site building and the setting to the north/north-east corner is characterised by the service area of the supermarket and surrounding buildings. The proposed addition of the gantry, which would be located within the existing building line and therefore have limited visibility from the

Church, would not alter this existing character and therefore there is not felt to be any impact on the setting of the Church from the proposals.

1-12 Grand Union Walk

This lies to the rear of the Sainsbury's store and comprises of a series of ten terraced houses and two flats. These were also designed by Sir Nicholas Grimshaw as part of his wider vision for the area in the early 1980's. The buildings comprise of a "High Tech" architectural style, which complements the Sainsbury's supermarket. The buildings are faced in aluminium cladding facing the canal, together with motorised glass walls on the northern elevation. The terraces fronting onto the Regents Canal have historically been industrial in character and therefore, the 'High Tech' architectural style ensures that the buildings integrate well within the existing setting and character of the area.

There is only intervisibility between the proposed works and the rear elevation of the listed terrace, which is of limited significance to the heritage asset given the lack of architectural design and its location facing onto the supermarket service yard. Nonetheless, given the design of the gantry would accord with the design of the host building and be read as part of this, there is not felt to be any impact to the setting or significance of the listed terrace.

HERITAGE LEGISLATION AND POLICY

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 provides the statutory test for consideration of proposals affecting a listed building or its setting. Section 66 (1) states:

"In considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses"

Section 72 (1) of the Act requires that LPAs pay special attention in the exercise of planning functions to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area.

For reasons given above, it is considered that the proposals would accord with section 72 and 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

The preservation and enhancement of heritage assets forms an important part of the NPPF Paragraph 194 of the NPPF states that in determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. The above statement is considered to fulfil this requirement

Paragraph 199 states that 'When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than

substantial harm to its significance.’ For reasons given above, the proposals would cause no harm to the significance of the heritage assets and therefore fulfils this test.

Further, as outlined elsewhere, the proposals are required to allow the sustainable and continued use of the building as a supermarket, as it was originally designed to be, to serve the community. This accords with paragraph 197 of NPPF which states (a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation and (b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality.

CAMDEN PLANNING POLICY

Local Plan Policy D2 sets out that the Council will preserve and, where appropriate, enhance Camden’s rich and diverse heritage assets and their settings, including conservation areas and listed buildings. For reasons given above, the proposals would accord with this policy.

LONDON PLAN POLICY

London Plan Policy HC1 sets out that development proposals affecting heritage assets, and their settings, should conserve their significance, by being sympathetic to the assets. For reasons given above, the proposals would accord with this policy.

HERITAGE SUMMARY

The proposals have been carefully designed to ensure that they will not harm the significance of the Grade II Listed Building or the setting of the nearby heritage assets or the character and appearance of the conservation area. They are located to the rear of the building which is characterised by the existing service yard use and appearance and is therefore of lesser significance and hidden from a number of the nearby heritage assets.

Further, the proposed design and materiality will match the existing design and materials of this part of the building and sit within the existing building line. As a result the proposals would maintain the existing character and appearance of the conservation area, setting of the nearby listed buildings and the special historic and architectural interest of the listed building.

The proposed development is required to provide sustainable and efficient servicing for the supermarket use and therefore only serves to enhance and support the use of this heritage asset in its original and intended use, which will thus continue to serve the community.

NOISE AND AIR QUALITY

The proposed plant, which will be installed, have been chosen specifically to minimise the noise impact. The proposed plant will potentially operate 24 hours a day, although it should be noted that these units operate as required to meet demand and generally at a reduced capacity at night.

A Noise Impact Assessment has been prepared by Noise Solutions Limited to establish the potential impact of the plant to on nearby noise sensitive neighbours.

The report concludes that the cumulative plant noise emission levels for the proposed plant have been determined to be in compliance with London Borough of Camden’s usual requirements. Therefore, noise from the plant proposals should not be a reason for refusal of planning permission.



In light of this, the proposed scheme is compliant with Camden Local Plan Policy A4 and London Plan Policy D14.

The proposed plant machinery does not produce any emissions or particulates therefore complying with Camden Local Plan Policy CC4 and London Plan Policy SI1.

CONCLUSIONS

We are looking forward to receiving confirmation that the application has been validated. In the meantime, if you wish to discuss the proposal or require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me, or my colleague Anna Stott.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jamie Alba-Duignan'. The signature is fluid and cursive.

Jamie Alba-Duignan