



NTA PLANNING LLP
TOWN PLANNING CONSULTANTS



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

Our Ref: 1185
2nd May 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 consultants/agent. We note that 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 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 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.

Providing outdoor amenity space is also a great way to boost mental health and allows office workers to the wellness benefits of natural light and greenery, which should be 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 also 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 to Monday to Friday 9am-7pm, 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.

The commercial office space only has ownership of the ground, first and second floor. As such, the plant could only be located within the demised space. 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 be enclosed within an appropriate housing to prevent noise disturbance. The proposals will actually improve and protect the amenity of the nearby occupiers.

The plant is, in part, 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.

When taking into account the distance between the plant and Cresta House itself, in conjunction to the noise reduction proposed, we refer to the Noise Impact Assessment which concludes that the proposed plant would be deemed sufficient to protect residential amenity. As such, there will be no detrimental impact on residential amenity above the existing set up.

We have now issued an amended Noise Impact Assessment, which straightened up any typos that were noted and responded to the points raised by the letters of representation.

3. Trees/Hedging

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

The applicant assures that planting will be no higher than 2m and will not enable climbing access to the floor above. As such, potential burglaries resulting from thieves climbing the planting will not arise. It is frankly impossible that the proposed planting would grow to 8m and reach the nearest residential balcony from the terrace on the first floor. Furthermore, the low level planting will not grow to a height that would obstruct views from the residential units above. 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. The window style/design will be consistent with the existing. The reduction of the recesses will also improve the quality and amount of light received within the office. After amendment, the set back of the first-floor windows will be more consistent with the existing chamfers.

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.

The areas to left and right on the terrace beyond the gates are for maintenance only, and will not be accessible by the public. The gates will be locked at all other times.

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