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Planning Development Control
London Borough of Camden
Camden Town Hall
London
WC1H 8ND

6 October 2023

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: APPLICATION BY SHEPHERD FOODS HOLDINGS LTD FOR PROVISION OF NEW FIRE ESCAPE ONTO BETTERTON STREET AND PARAPET WALL AT SECOND FLOOR LEVEL AT 77 SHELTON STREET, WC2H 2JQ

This application, on behalf of Shepherd Foods, for the provision of new fire escape onto Betterton Street and parapet wall at second floor level at 77 Shelton Street has been submitted via the Planning Portal (reference PP-12511273). Accordingly, please find the following attached in support of the planning application:-

1. Planning Application Form, signed and dated;
2. Relevant Ownership Certificates, signed and dated;
3. Site Location Plan at scale 1:1250, ref: 275/00;
4. Block Plan at scale 1:200 ref: 275/01;
5. Ground Floor Plan as existing ref: 275/1;
6. First Floor Plan as existing ref: 275/2;
7. Second Floor Plan as existing ref: 275/3;
8. Elevations as existing ref: 275/4;
9. Ground Floor Plan as proposed ref: 275/5;
10. First Floor Plan as proposed ref: 275/6;
11. Second Floor Plan as proposed ref: 275/7; and
12. Elevations as proposed ref: 275/8.

The planning application fee has been paid via the Planning Portal.

In addition to the above and the enclosed documentation I would be grateful if you could take into consideration the contents of this letter in the determination of the planning application.

The Proposal

This application seeks the provision of a new fire escape from/to Betterton Street into the building and upper floors and the addition of a parapet wall at second floor level to accommodate the fire escape and improve the safety of second floor users.

The use of the building remains in office use, and the alteration merely enables fire exits to be provided from office areas without having to access other office or private areas. This potentially improves the accessibility of the offices which remain largely vacant at the current time.

Background

The property, which was constructed in the 1950s, is arranged on basement, ground and two upper floors of office accommodation. The ground floor unit known as 24/25 Drury Lane has historically been used for retail purposes having originally been built and occupied by Sainsbury's. However in 2018 permission was granted allowing the rear part of the property fronting onto Shelton Street to be used as offices (ref: 2017/6560/P). This has been implemented. The front element of the unit facing onto Drury Lane continues to be occupied by Majestic Wines.

In 2013 an application was submitted by the applicant for '*Installation of a new shop front [facing Shelton Street] and the insertion of glazed doors along the south elevation [along the Shelton Street alleyway]*' under ref: 2013/6695/P.

Planning permission (ref: 2014/1157/P - approved 3 June 2014) granted consent for the erection of two mansard roof extensions facing Shelton Street and Drury Lane to provide additional Class B1 office space (102.5 sqm at the Shelton Street end of the building and 112 sqm at the Drury Lane end). There have subsequently been applications to vary the Drury Street elevation (ref: 2017/1053/P) and a non-material amendment (ref: 2017/5820/P) to make minor changes to materials, window/door positions and roof lights. These permissions have been implemented.

In order to maximise the quality of the office environment at first floor level an application for additional windows on the Shelton Street alley was submitted and approved (ref: 2023/22201P dated 19 July 2023). The windows are a continuation of the windows already existing on this elevation and the permission is shortly to be implemented.

Planning Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework, September 2023, confirms that planning applications must be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise, but also confirms the assumption in favour of sustainable development, which includes seeking positive improvements in the quality of the built, natural and historic environment, as well as people's quality of life.

The relevant Development Plan Policies are contained in the Camden Local Plan, adopted in July 2017. It is relevant to note that the site falls within the Seven Dials Conservation Area, the Central Activity Zone (CAZ) and within a 'highly accessible area'.

Policy G1 (Delivery and Location of Growth) confirms the Council's commitment to securing high quality development and promoting the most efficient use of land and buildings by supporting development that makes best use of its site and resisting development that makes inefficient use of land. The policy outlines the assessed requirement for 685,000sqm of office floor space needed to 2031 for Camden.

Policy E1 (Economic Development) advises that the Council will secure a successful and inclusive economy in Camden by creating the conditions for economic growth and harnessing the benefits for local residents and businesses. The Council will, inter alia, support businesses of all sizes, in particular start-ups, small and medium sized enterprises; maintain a stock of premises suitable for a variety of business activities; and direct new offices to Central London to meet the forecasted demand.

Policy E2 (Employment premises and sites) confirms the Council will encourage the provision of employment premises and sites in the borough. Existing sites will be protected particularly those that support small businesses and that support the function of the Central Activities Zone (CAZ).

Planning Issues

The proposal relates only to the addition of a fire escape door at ground floor level and parapet wall at second floor level to improve the access/exit for fire safety reasons and general safety and amenity reasons. No change to the use of building is proposed. The building will continue contributing to the economy of Camden as existing. Indeed, the addition of fire exit and parapet wall will improve the offices and hopefully make them more attractive to occupiers.

The physical appearance of the building would remain broadly as existing, when viewed from Shelton Street and Drury Lane with only a very small change from Betterton Street. The new fire escape door has been designed so as to match and mirror similar doors on Betterton Street being of a domestic appearance in line with other access doors on this elevation primarily servicing residential uses. The door is to be surrounded by brick to match the existing elevation and general built form on this street.

The parapet wall at second floor level will screen the fire escape as it rises from the first floor and is continued along the elevation to provide screening to the roof area of 77 Shelton Street, which includes plant and a walk way, when viewed from the residential properties fronting Betterton Street. The parapet wall also provides a safety barrier for those using the second floor roof top which provides access between office spaces and for those working on plant in this area. Accordingly, it is considered

that the proposed fire escape and parapet will continue to contribute positively to the local character, function, viability and amenity of the area.

Furthermore the proposal continues to support office floorspace contributing to meeting a recognised requirement supported by policies G1, E1 and E2 of the adopted plan, albeit, despite marketing, much of the floor space in the building remains vacant.

There are no amenity issues arising from the proposal as the fire escape and parapet wall will not raise any noise or disturbance issues and offers some amenity benefits. The site is located in a mixed use area with the immediate surrounding uses being primarily offices with some residential uses fronting Betterton Street so the proposal is completely compactable with its position in this high density Central London location.

As noted above the site is with the Seven Dials Conservation Area and consideration has been given to this but it is not considered there is any harm arising to the conservation area for the reasons detailed above and below.

Design and Access Statement

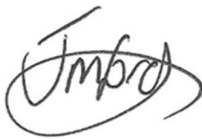
On the basis that application relates only to a minor change to the small? Betterton Street ground floor elevation of the building and the additional of a parapet wall on an internally facing elevation which is not visible from the public highway, there is no requirement for a Design and Access Statement. However, it is considered appropriate an appropriate design is proposed, meeting the needs of the occupier in a sensitive manner.

Conclusion

The proposal complies with the development plan including specific policies G1, E1 and E2 supporting the provision of office floorspace in this location and ensuring the needs of occupiers are met. The fire escape and parapet wall ensure that the building is fit for purpose meeting the needs of those utilising the building.

I look forward to discussing the application in due course but if you have any queries, please contact me on 07770 328674 or jackie@jmsplanning.com.

Yours faithfully



Jackie Ford
JMS Planning & Development

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