Camden Council

Planning & Regeneration

2nd Floor

5 Pancras Square

London

N1C 4AG

9th October 2023

Dear Sir/Madam,

**25 Old Gloucester Street, London, WC1N 3AF**

**Planning & Listed Building Application**

**PP-12387480**

On behalf of Nilkanth Estates Limited, via the Planning Portal today I have submitted an application for planning permission and listed building consent for the following:

*Extension of basement to accommodate additional cultural centre accommodation (use class F1 and F2), replacement of second floor at rear to accommodate offices (class E1) and conversion of front part of building at second and third floor levels to create 2 x studio dwellings.*

The application is supported by the following:

* Archaeological Desk Based Assessment
* Basement Impact Assessment
* CIL Form
* Construction/Demolition Management Plan
* Daylight and Sunlight Report
* Demolition Drawings
* Design and Access Statement
* Energy Strategy
* Existing and Proposed Drawings
* Heritage Statement
* Noise Impact Assessment
* Site Location Plan
* Sustainability Statement
* Transport Statement
* Travel Plan

**Planning History**

Planning permission (2011/6097/P) and listed building consent (2011/6431/L) were granted for the development of the site on 21/05/2013 for the following development:

*Erection of single storey extension at second floor level, including installation of external stair in front lightwell from ground floor to basement level with new gates, and installation of lift and housing to existing non-residential institution (Class D1).*

The above development related to an extension to the building, which would be occupied by the existing D1 use. In granting planning permission and listed building consent, the officer’s delegated report noted the following:

* The site was vacant at the time that the application was made.
* Single storey roof top extension was a later addition and as part of the listing process was identified as having no architectural interest.
* Proposed extension would be compatible with the distinctive steep pitched roof of the front building.
* Proposal would not cause any harm to the amenity of the surrounding area or buildings by reason of overlooking noise disturbance or loss of light.
* Proposals would not result in increased footfall at the site or interfere with the free-flow of traffic or local parking conditions in the locality.

A certificate of Lawful Development Certificate was issued by Camden Council on 13/07/2016 (reference 2016/2836/P) to confirm that the above permission had been implemented under Section 91 of the Planning Act.

In July 2017, an application for planning permission and listed building consent for the following proposal was submitted to the Council (reference 2017/3997/P):

*Erection of a ground and first floor rear extension and a 3 storey extension to create , first, second and third floor to provide 6 residential units (Use Class C3) following demolition of existing rear and side extensions and first floor. Refurbishment of existing D1 use on basement and ground floors and change of use from ancillary D1 uses to C3 use on upper floors. Construction of an extended basement area to the rear, construction of mezzanine level at first floor, new oriel windows, outdoor terrace and; Alterations to front and side elevations to include new front doors, replacement front and side windows and gate.*

Following discussions with officers, the application was withdrawn in October 2018 as a number of issues were identified including the following:

* Loss of D1 floorspace.
* Justification for demolition particularly the small hall at the rear.
* Scale of development.
* Design.

In November 2021 planning permission (2020/4596/P) and listed building consent (2020/4656/L) were granted for the following:

*Internal and external alterations including partial demolition of existing building and erection of replacement four storey extension, extension of basement, and change of use from Cultural Centre (Use Class F1) to provide 3 x flats (Use Class C3) and Cultural Centre (Use Class F1).*

*Alterations including partial demolition of existing building and erection of replacement four storey extension, extension of basement, and change of use from Cultural Centre (Use Class F1) to provide 3 x flats (Use Class C3) and Cultural Centre (Use Class F1).*

However, the implications of the worldwide pandemic and the more recent economic crisis are that it is not possible to implement this permission due to financial constraints. As such, a more modest proposal is sought which it is expected will still deliver a wonderful community space.

**Planning Policy**

*Land Use Principle*

Based on previous schemes, permissions and consents, one of the main themes has focused on the need to retain community facilities as set out in Policies C2 and C3 of the Local Plan 2017. In this respect, the existing facility is vacant and has been for several years. This proposal is an opportunity to upgrade the space thus making it infinitely more usable and attractive.

The existing building has a total GIA of 845m2. It is proposed to extend the basement, replace the second floor at the rear with offices (use class E) and convert part of the first and second floors into 2 studio dwellings.

This will result in the community use comprising 795m2 and the residential element 146m2. On the face of it, this results in a small reduction of community space (50m2). However, the existing community space has been vacant for several years and its condition continues to deteriorate. As such its contribution to community use is zero. Whilst resulting in a small reduction in community space, this proposal will result in 795m2 of quality space which will be an invaluable asset to the community.

As the site is in Central London as defined on the Proposals Map, the principle of offices (circa 136m2) is supported by Policy E1 of the Local Plan. It should also be noted that the introduction of office space as well as 2 studio dwellings will greatly assist in the viability of the project. These uses will ensure the long term future of the new community facility and the listed building. In addition, the offices will generate employment in this central location.

Policy H1 of the Local Plan seeks to maximise housing supply. Clearly, the introduction of 2 studio dwellings will assist. With regard to Policy H2, the inclusion of dwellings is encouraged albeit isn’t a requirement. Nevertheless, 2 studio dwellings are proposed.

As a consequence, we consider the proposal complies with Policies E1, H1, H2, C2 and C3 of the Local Plan.

Whilst Policy H7 requires homes of different sizes with a preference for 2 and 3 bed flats, it has previously been recognised by the Council that this policy should be applied flexibly. In this respect, paragraph 9.10 of the committee report related to the 2020 planning permission and listed building consent states:

*As such, the provision on site would not strictly correspond with the ambitions of this table within H7. It should be acknowledged however that this policy is to be applied flexibly. In this instance, it is acknowledged that the flats would be within the more historic front former school building of this listed building. Forming larger flats within the building could not be achieved without causing significant interventions into the historic fabric of the listed building. Combining two flats to form one larger unit was explored with the applicant, however it is acknowledged that the sale of these market flats is intended to fund the redevelopment project which would have significant public benefits, bringing the listed building into its optimum viable use, re-occupying this long term vacant building, and providing a significant level of F1(f) floorspace. Given the constraints of the site and demands of the project, in this instance, the mix of units is considered to be, on balance, acceptable.*

*Quality of Residential Accommodation*

The proposal includes 2 studio dwellings both of which are dual aspect with the main aspect east facing. Both flats exceed the overall space standards as well as room dimensions and storage requirements. There are no privacy issues and both dwellings meet the BRE daylight and sunlight guidance.

With regard to external amenity space, the 2020 committee report states in paragraph 10.11:

*Private external amenity space could not be provided for each of the proposed flats without significant interventions into the historic fabric of the listed building. Queen Square (public open space) exists adjacent to the site and the site represents a listed building within central London. As such, the lack of private amenity space in this instance is considered to be acceptable.*

**Conclusion**

The original concept for this building cannot be delivered due to financial constraints. Nevertheless, this proposal will deliver a community space offering a diverse range of facilities to the community as well offices and 2 studio dwellings. The offices and dwellings will assist in cross subsidising the development and the long term future of the community use and listed building.

Yours sincerely



**Mark Pender**

**PPM Planning Limited**