

Design & Access and Planning Statement

Site: 339/339A Finchley Road, London NW3 6EP

Proposal: Change of use of the upper ground floor from retail use (Use Class E) to a place of worship (Use Class F1).

1.0 Application Site and Location

The property is composed of upper ground floor showroom space over a lower ground and ground floor. The property has the benefit of air conditioning raised floors and a concrete slab between the retail unit and the residential demise above.

The full height glass frontage leads into an upper ground floor showroom with clear 3.5m eaves height on lower ground.

The property is currently vacant with the previous tenant's (Furniture retailer) fixtures removed.

The property is located within a designated town centre.

2.0 The Planning Proposal

Change of use of the upper ground floor from retail use (Use Class E) to a place of worship (Use Class F1).

Hours of opening:

Mon - Sat: 8am - 11pm

Sun: 8am - 6pm

Number of Parishioners: 150

The proposal is car free but will provide 5 secure cycle spaces internally (1 long term and 4 short term spaces), in compliance with London Plan standard's.

3.0 Relevant Planning Policies.

Policy C2 (Community facilities) of the Councils adopted Local Plan, in part, supports the provision of community facilities. The Council will work with its partners to ensure that community facilities and services are developed and modernised to meet the changing needs of our community and reflect new approaches to the delivery of services.

Policy A4 (Noise and vibration) seeks, in part, to ensure that noise sensitive uses (residential uses) are not detrimentally impacted by noise generating uses.

Policy TC2 (Camden's centres and other shopping areas). This policy promotes successful and vibrant town centres to serve the needs of residents, workers and visitors.

Paragraph 9.32 of the Local Plan defines town centre uses and this includes community uses like places of worship.

Policy TC4 (Town centre uses). This policy states: *"The Council will ensure that the development of shopping, services, food, drink, entertainment and other town centre uses does not cause harm to the character, function, vitality and viability of a centre, the local area or the amenity of neighbours."*

Policy T2 (Parking and car-free development) The Council requires all new developments in the borough to be car-free.

4.0 Planning Considerations

The main planning considerations are as follows:

- Loss of vacant retail space and principal of providing a place of worship
- Impact on the character and appearance of the area.
- Impact on neighbouring amenity
- Highway matters

5.0 Loss of vacant retail space and principal of providing a place of worship

Policy C2 (Community facilities) of the Councils adopted Local Plan, in part, supports the provision of community facilities. The policy states the Council will work with its partners to ensure that community facilities and services are developed and modernised to meet the changing needs of our community and reflect new approaches to the delivery of services.

Policy TC2 (Camden's centres and other shopping areas). This policy promotes successful and vibrant town centres to serve the needs of residents, workers and visitors.

Paragraph 9.32 of the Local Plan defines town centre uses and this includes community uses like places of worship.

Policy TC4 (Town centre uses). This policy states: *"The Council will ensure that the development of shopping, services, food, drink, entertainment and other town centre uses does not cause harm to the character, function, vitality and viability of a centre, the local area or the amenity of neighbours."*

The site is located within a designated town centre. The proposed change of use from vacant retail to a place of worship would maintain the vitality and viability of the town centre. The premises would be regularly used all day and evening, attracting congregations up to 150 persons. The premises would also provide meeting rooms and an area for Sunday school meetings. Persons using the premises would mainly arrive by public transport, the majority

of which would use Finchley Road Station. This means the majority of users of the place of worship would walk through the town centre, significantly increasing the chances they will use the other town centre facilities and shops. Therefore, it is envisaged the place of worship would significantly increase the foot fall within the town centre.

Therefore, the change of use to a place of worship is a compatible use in a town centre which protects the function, vitality and viability of a town centre.

6.0 Impact on the character and appearance of the area.

The proposal does not include any external alterations.

The use of the premises as a place of worship would not result in any harm to the character and appearance of the area. The increase in comings and goings from the premises would promote a strong and vibrant town centre, enhancing the character of the town centre.

Impact on Neighbouring Amenity

Policy A4 (Noise and vibration) seeks, in part, to ensure that noise sensitive uses (residential uses) are not detrimentally impacted by noise generating uses.

The proposed congregation area is set back from the front entrance and will have an internal acoustic wall. To ensure no break out noise.

The proposed hours of opening are:

Mon - Sat: 8am - 11pm

Sun: 8am - 6pm

The maximum number of Parishioners will be 150 – this can be controlled by a planning condition.

The noise impact assessment concludes the proposal would result in very limited break out noise to neighbouring residential occupier located above the premises. Weight also needs to be given to the high background levels of noise associated with this very busy road.

8.0 Highway matters

Policy T2 (Parking and car-free development) requires all new developments in the borough to be car-free.

Paragraph 111 of the NPPF advises that planning proposals should only be refused on highway grounds if the non-provision of a car parking space would; *“be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.”*

No additional car parking spaces will be provided.

The proposal would provide 5 secure cycle spaces internally (1 long term and 4 short term spaces), in compliance with London Plan standard's.