

Secret Group – 180 Arlington Rd, London NW1 7HL – Planning Application  
Our Reference (D-SC-ARL-23-018)

# Proposed Employment Training Plan

## The Purpose of this Document

This document has been prepared on behalf of Secret Group Limited for their Change of Use application from D2 (Bingo Hall) to an event space (Sui Generis Use Class) to be located at 180 Arlington Rd, London NW1 7HL.

The Change of Use of 180 Arlington Rd, London NW1 7HL will allow the site in Camden to be used for a range of event activities, including film screenings, theatrical performance, community activities, music, and interactive / static display spaces.

This document has been prepared to lay out the proposed employment and training plan relevant to the application.

## The Site

The site is bounded by Arlington Road to the West, Parkway to the South, Inverness Street to the North, and Camden High Street to the East. The site has access to the public highway on both Arlington Road and Inverness Street.

The site is currently occupied by Mecca Bingo. The building was constructed in the 1930's, originally as The Gaumont Camden Town, a 2,742 seat cinema. In 1968, the site was split horizontally into the Odeon as the upper portion, accessed from Parkway, and the Rank Strand Club as the lower portion, which was later renamed as Mecca.

*“Trading has been tough across hospitality, and regular bingo players have been slow to return to halls since the pandemic. As a result, despite the prime location of our Camden club, we are not seeing the footfall required to ensure the continued operation of the venue as a bingo hall.*

*180 Arlington Road has been a Mecca Bingo for 55 years and rather than mothball the site, we are keen to secure its future. Having reviewed various options we are confident that Secret Cinema’s proposal will build on the site’s great heritage of community, excitement and entertainment, and offers the best solution both for the venue and the area.”*

*Statement from Rank*

SGL are excited to revitalise the site, bringing it back into popular usage, which is fitting with central entertainment uses of the area. In recent years, Camden has become home to a number of immersive theatrical events, such as Peaky Blinders and Tomb Raider at Camden Stables Market, and it is hoped that we can build on this success, and make Camden a destination for immersive theatre in London.

The site is centrally located on Arlington Road, with Camden Town Northern Line station being an easy 3 minute walk away. The surrounding area is a mixture of residential and commercial uses, with a number of bars and restaurants being located within close proximity.

Overall the site extends to 1,913 m2, on the ground floor, with some ancillary back of house spaces being located at basement and first floor levels.

Area	Current Use	Proposed Use	Retained Use m2	Changed Use m2
Ground Floor	Foyer & Bar	Foyer & Bar	775m2	
Ground Floor	Bingo Hall	Main Event Space		1,140m2
1st Floor	Offices, Dressing Rooms and Ancillary	Offices, Dressing Rooms and Ancillary	175m2	
Basement	Plant Rooms	Plant Rooms	329m2	

## The Proposed Development

The building was originally designed as a cinema/ music hall arrangement with front of house, auditorium and stage area. It is proposed that SGL will utilise all areas in a similar manner to those which have subsequently been managed as a Bingo Hall.

- Existing foyer area (access from/to Arlington road) - remaining as main entrance and foyer/ congregation space
- Existing bingo hall (accessed internally from the foyer) - remaining as audience space/ auditorium
- Bar area (access from/to Inverness Street and internally from the auditorium) - remaining as bar/ function space

As the previous use was within a similar use category, very little work on the building's infrastructure is planned. A modest amount of internal refurbishment works are required. External elements such as windows and doors will be refurbished inline with their current appearance, and a separate advertising consent application will be submitted for the replacement of the property's signage.

SGL plans to use the space as a multi-purpose events venue, and it is the intention that a number of individual events will be hosted on the site.

Given the size of the venue, it is currently planned that these shows will follow a 'pulse' format, with tickets being available on a time slot basis. This approach effectively distributes the audience throughout the day, rather than a singular 'curtain' time, which concentrates audience arrivals and departures into a short time period.

In addition, it is planned to provide a food and beverage offering, within the area currently occupied by Mecca's current bar. This will be primarily provided to compliment the main offering within the event space, but at times may run independently using the entrance on Inverness Street.

SGL are aware that Arlington Road and the surrounding areas have increasingly become an area of high crime and antisocial behaviour. It is envisaged the proposed development will have a positive impact in reducing these issues. The increased visible staffing presence around the entrance, and the nature of the audience flow being distributed throughout the day will help reduce the risk of crime usually associated with little footfall.

The landlord is keen to keep the site in use, and the proposed development provides a secure future for the application site, further reducing the risk of crime and antisocial behaviour normally associated with vacant sites.

## Employment and Training Strategy

### Community Enrichment Programme

Secret Cinema puts the audience at the heart of the story. In that same vein, we put the local community at the heart of our venue.

Our bespoke community programme delivers enriching opportunities for schools, young people, and local community groups in the form of **workshops, masterclasses, set tours, and career pathways** into the creative arts. We use our venues and our experts to deliver social, cultural, and economic benefits and leave a lasting legacy.

Creative Arts form the lifeblood of human nature. Our work in venues can play a vital role in connecting communities with the future of this industry.

Secret Cinema has the experience, resources, and passion to push the boundaries in how we ignite creativity across the community and connect culture with the local economy. We will inspire, and bring together, local people to enhance learning and experience wonderful storytelling adventures.

By harnessing imagination throughout the community, we will trailblaze the next generation into the creative industries.

### Our Vision

Our vision is that our venue will become a dedicated creative space for community groups and local young people utilising the infrastructure and resources of Secret Cinema

- Harnessing imagination and enhancing learning
- Placing people at the centre of an inspiring environment
- Engaging with the local community
- Giving young people and community groups access to world class immersive events and cultural experiences
- Delivering access-to-all employment pathways

## Employment Pathways

### Work Experience Placements

During live shows we will have an allocation of placements available for 18 - 25 year olds, working with the Inclusive Economy team at Camden Council, as well as directly with local schools and colleges.

All work experience participants will have the opportunity to shadow the Front of House, Operations, Stage Management, and Technical teams under live event conditions.

Our aim is that work experience participants go on to paid employment on current or future events.

We also intend to work with existing careers fairs to provide talks on career pathways into the creative industries for local schools and college students.

### Employment

#### Construction Phase

The planned construction phase is limited in scope, and mainly concentrates on internal refurbishment in order to bring the facilities up to date.

Where possible, SGL will endeavour to advertise any temporary roles as they arise during the construction phase to the local community first.

Given the limited time period of this phase of the project, it is not possible to include a meaningful training placement for this project.

#### Operational Phase

We will work with Camden Council's back-to-work schemes (Goodwork Camden) to advertise available vacancies at the venue. These will include roles from performance, WHAM, costume, FOH, cleaners, security team, bar staff, and art department, to name but a few.

All Job Vacancies will also be posted on the dedicated residents webpage as roles become available:  
<https://company.secretcinema.com/camden-residents>

Below is an example of the roles that are created during the operational phase of an event:

Role	Number of FTE Roles
Cleaning Staff	4-8
Security Staff	4-6
Bar Staff	10-20
FOH Staff	5-10
Technical & Stage Management Staff	11-15
Venue Management Staff	3
Laundry Team	2-4
Performance Team	This varies depending on the event
Art / Carpentry / Tech Standby	2-6

*Please note these numbers are indicative and are likely to increase in numbers with the specific requirements of the events.*

## Schools Outreach

### Primary

Interactive assemblies - introducing immersive theatre - Ages 5 - 11

Create your own immersive experience - developing skills in confidence, performance and creativity - Ages 8-11

### Secondary

Assemblies and talks giving an overview of immersive theatre and careers in the creative industry - Ages 11-18

Workshops series with Secret Cinema experts and national partners: The Lego Group, The Brit School, V&A Museum, The Royal Observatory. Aligned with KS3 - 5 curricula - Ages 11-18

## Example Workshops

Age	Aimed at....	Timing	Details
11-18	Secondary Schools	10-20 min assembly	Overview of SC and careers in the performing arts/live events industry. Focus on the range of careers
17-18	School leavers	10-20 min assembly	Overview of SC and careers in the performing arts/live events industry. Promotion of 2 day work experience for age 18+
17-18	School leavers with interest in events / creative arts	1-2 hour workshop	Masterclass in creating and performing an immersive experience with Secret Cinema crates. Culminates in students itching their own SC show
13-16	Drama / Media	1-2 hour workshop	Masterclass in creating and producing an immersive experience. Culminates in students pitching their own SC show.
14-18	Media / Film studies / Graphic Design / Art	1-2 hour workshop	Masterclass in creating a marketing campaign for a live event with SC experts
14-18	English / Drama / Art+Design	1-2 hour workshop	Masterclass in analytical skills: reading and interpreting signs, symbols and language in film
8-11	Primary School	1-2 hour workshop	Drama activities exploring themes of the film with aims to develop confidence, performance skills and analytical skills in a dynamic and exciting workshop

## Community Groups Outreach

### Youth Groups, Holiday Clubs and Community Groups

**Set Tours** - Including backstage, tech and costume departments. Overview of operations and careers in live events and immersive theatre.

**World Building Workshop** - Create your own immersive experience - developing skills in confidence, performance and creativity.

**Classes** - Dance, Drama, Stage combat, Stage makeup, Script writing with Secret Cinema professionals

**A Day in the Life Workshop** - An immersive experience on the set with some of the performance team developing skills in confidence, movement and creativity.