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Camden Council
Planning – Development Control
Camden Town Hall
London
WC1H 8ND

Our ref: NJB/MCA/U0023777

PP ref: PP-11986484

17 January 2023

Dear Sir or Madam,

Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)
Application for planning permission at 103B Camley Street, London, N1C 4PF

On behalf of our client, Urbanest UK Limited (“the Applicant”) we write to submit an application for a change of use at 103B Camley Street, London, N1C 4PF (“the Site”).

Planning permission is sought for the following:

“change of use from a café / restaurant use (Use Class E) to student amenity space (Sui Generis)”

The Site

The site is located on Camley Street, immediately to the north-west and north of King’s Cross and St Pancras Stations and adjacent to the Regents Canal. The site is not within a conservation area but immediately to the west is the Regents Canal Conservation Area and the King’s Cross Conservation Area is to the south.

103 Camley Street comprises a mix of building ranging from 4 to 12 storeys which includes student accommodation units, 40 residential flats, incubator business units covering 1,653sqm floorspace and 2 retail / cafe units.

The proposals relate specifically to 103B Camley Street was granted permission to be in use class A1 (retail) or A3 (café) and has been vacant since Temple of Seitan restaurant left the unit in February 2020. The other retail unit at 103A Camley Street is occupied by Co-op supermarket.

103B Camley Street is a courtyard unit, not visible from Camley Street or the canal. Unlike the unit at 103A Camley Street, which is occupied by Co-op and that fronts onto Camley Street, the unit is hidden in the courtyard and does not have 24 hour access to the public.

The Polices map identifies 103 Camley Street as being in the Strategic Viewing Corridor Between Parliament Hill and St Paul’s Cathedral and it is allocated as Site 7 in the Camden Site Allocations Plan (2013) for mixed

uses including permanent residential and flexible employment floorspace alongside other complementary uses.

The site is also allocated for mixed use development in the Camley Street Neighbourhood Plan (2021).

Planning History

We have undertaken a review of the site's planning history using Camden Council's online planning register.

- Planning Application 2011/5695/P - Demolition of existing industrial buildings (Class B1c & B8) and the erection of a building ranging from 4-12 storeys to create a mixed use development comprising 307 x student units accommodation (Class Sui-Generis) including student cycle store; 14 x 2-bed, 15 x 3-bed and 11 x 4-bed self contained residential flats (Class C3); incubator business units comprising 1,653sqm floorspace (Class B1); 2 x retail units of 406sqm (Class A1/A3) and associated works and improvements to public realm including canal footpath (approved 30 March 2012)

The proposals relate to one of the retail units in this permission under the old use class system A1 and A3.

Proposal

The proposals are to change the use of the unit from a café / restaurant use (Use Class E(b)) to student amenity space (Sui Generis).

As such planning permission is sought for the following:

“Change of use from a café / restaurant use (Use Class E) to student amenity space (Sui Generis)”

The courtyard unit with a floorspace of 101sqm (GIA) is a vacant restaurant use (Use Class E(b)) with the aim to change the use to student amenity space (Sui Generis).

The space will provide a convenient location to provide additional space for students and encourages collaboration and interaction.

The space will be available from 08:00 – 22:00 to all residents via controlled key fob entry, for individual and communal study, monitored through Urbanest's regular building walk regime and CCTV coverage. Outside of these hours the space is available for quiet study by requesting access from the 24 hour onsite team. Staff will oversee the space as they do for all other common commons in the building. There will be no impact on the surrounding area.

Resident support events, such as Resident Mental Health & Welfare talks and University-led community engagement sessions will be reviewed for suitability by the Operations Manager. Such events will be scheduled to ensure no disruption to other residents within the property or incubator users, these events are generally held outside of normal study/office hours.

No external alterations are proposed and the proposals only relate to the change the use of the unit.

Planning Policy Context

Section 38(6) of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that proposals be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicated otherwise. Accordingly, the Development Plan is comprised of:

- The London Plan (March 2021); and
- Camden Local Plan (July 2017)

Planning Assessment

Policy

London Plan Policy H15 (purpose-built student accommodation) advises that purpose-built student accommodation should provide adequate functional living space and layout.

Camden Local Plan Policy G1 (Delivery and location of growth) seeks that development makes the best use of the site and takes into consideration its surroundings and amenity and resists development that makes inefficient use of Camden's limited land.

Local Plan Policy TC1 (Quality and Location of retail development) sets out that shopping and related uses are focused in designated growth areas and existing centres. The site falls outside the Kings Cross and St Pancras Growth Areas and therefore not relevant. Additionally Local Plan Policy TC4 (Town centre uses) advises that other town centre uses such as cafes and restaurants must not harm the character, function, vitality and viability of a centre or local area.

Local Plan Policy C1 (health and wellbeing) sets out that the council will promote vibrant and healthy communities by ensuring services that support health, social and cultural wellbeing.

Local Plan Policy C3 (Cultural and leisure facilities) states that new leisure facilities will be sought in mixed use development and will seek shared use or extended access for the community in appropriate developments. The council expects the site of new facilities to take into account its associated impacts.

Assessment

Although marketing or viability evidence is only required for applications involving the loss of community facilities, cultural and leisure facilities, pubs, shops and employment uses, the proposals are supported by a Marketing Report prepared by Etch.

Use Classes A1, A2 and A3 are now replaced with Use Class E and specifically the unit falls under Class E(b) for the sale of food and drink for consumption on premises. The Marketing Report highlights the difficulty in finding a Class E(b) tenant for the unit, following the closure of Temple of Seitan in February 2020. This report highlights the lack of interest for a restaurant or café use for the unit which is hidden in the courtyard and not visible from Camley Street or the canal. As the unit is within the courtyard of the building it does not allow for 24 hour access to the public. This was voiced by potential tenants who raised concerns and with the lack of footfall and visibility from the canal.

The proposals for an alternative use as amenity space for students is considered appropriate and makes the best of use of the unit which has been vacant for a number of months and therefore complying with Local Plan Policy G1 in making the best use of the site.

The proposals will provide additional living space for the students within the building and is considered to significantly enhance the quality of life for the students residing in the accommodation, whilst also promoting student wellbeing. The unit is a convenient location to provide additional space for students and encourages collaboration and interaction.

The change of use would provide social collaboration for students and provides another common room for student to use. With University College London (UCL) students occupying the student bedrooms, dialogue with UCL have confirmed that the students would value additional amenity space on site and the courtyard unit at 103B Camley Street offers a perfect location to make use of an underutilised space.

The flexibility of an additional space helps to form a sense of community for students and has benefits in not only convenience in location but also in social interaction, lifestyle and wellbeing.

The proposed change of use is therefore supported by policy, with London Plan Policy H15 seeking purpose built student accommodation provides adequate functional living space and Local Plan policies C1 and C3 supporting services that promote wellbeing and cultural and leisure facilities.

Overall it is considered that the proposals are supported by the policies in both the London Plan and Camden Local Plan.

Application Documents

In support of this application, we enclose the following supporting documents:

- Completed Application Form and certificates, prepared by Gerald Eve LLP;
- Covering Letter prepared by Gerald Eve LLP;
- Site Location Plan, prepared by Allford Hall Monaghan Morris;
- Existing Floorplan, prepared by Allford Hall Monaghan Morris; and
- Marketing Report, prepared by Etch.

An application fee of £462 (and an additional £64 service charge) has been paid separately.

We trust that we have provided all of the material required for the purposed of validation and therefore await confirmation of the registration and validation of this application shortly. Should you have any queries or require further information, please contact either Nick Brindley (Tel: 07944 584 743) or Max Cartwright (07500 605 944).

Yours faithfully,

Gerald Eve LLP.

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