

Application ref: 2024/2698/P
Contact: Gary Wong
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Date: 27 August 2024

Development Management
Regeneration and Planning
London Borough of Camden
Town Hall
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WC1H 9JE

Phone: 020 7974 4444

planning@camden.gov.uk
www.camden.gov.uk/planning

Victoria Ramez Architects
Garden Studios
High Street Gosforth
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE3 1LX

Dear Sir/Madam

DECISION

Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)

Full Planning Permission Granted

Address:

Ground Floor
181 Drury Lane
London
WC2B 5QF

Proposal:

Change of use of ground floor unit from an escape room (Sui Generis) to a cafe (Class E).

Drawing Nos:

Location plan; 24019-EX-00-100-; 24019-EX-10-101-; planning statement dated 14/08/2024 prepared by Victoria Ramez Architects.

The Council has considered your application and decided to grant permission subject to the following condition(s):

Condition(s) and Reason(s):

- 1 The development hereby permitted must be begun not later than the end of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: In order to comply with the provisions of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

- 2 The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:

Location plan; 24019-EX-00-100-; 24019-EX-10-101-; planning statement dated 14/08/2024 prepared by Victoria Ramez Architects.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interest of proper planning.

- 3 All new external work shall be carried out in materials that resemble, as closely as possible, in colour and texture those of the existing building, unless otherwise specified in the approved application.

Reason: To safeguard the appearance of the premises and the character of the immediate area in accordance with the requirements of policy D1 and D2 of the London Borough of Camden Local Plan 2017.

- 4 No music shall be played on the premises in such a way as to be audible within any adjoining premises or on the adjoining highway.

Reason: To safeguard the amenities of the adjoining premises and the area generally in accordance with the requirements of policies A1 and A4 and of the London Borough of Camden Local Plan 2017.

- 5 The use hereby permitted shall not be carried out outside the following times:

Hours of operation from 0800-2100 Monday to Friday; 0900-2100 Saturday; 1000-2100 Sunday.

Hours of deliveries and servicing from 0800-1800 Monday to Friday; 0900-1800 Saturday; with no deliveries or servicing on Sunday.

No deliveries, servicing or customers shall be on the premises and no sound emanating from these premises shall be audible within any adjoining premises outside of these hours.

Reason: To safeguard the amenities of the adjoining premises and the area generally in accordance with the requirements of policies A1 and A4 of the London Borough of Camden Local Plan 2017.

- 6 No primary cooking shall take place on the premises.

Reason: To safeguard the amenities of the adjoining premises and the area generally in accordance with the requirements of policies A1 and A4 of the London Borough of Camden Local Plan 2017.

Informative(s):

- 1 Reasons for granting permission:

The application site relates two-storey building on the east side of Drury Lane. It was last used as an escape room at ground floor level and has been vacant since the Covid pandemic in 2020. The building is not listed but identified as a positive contributor to the Seven Dials (Covent Garden) Conservation Area. The unit is situated in a secondary frontage of the Covent Garden Central London Area (Specialist Retail Areas).

The proposal seeks planning permission for the change of use from an escape room (Sui Generis) to a café (Class E). No external alterations are proposed under this application.

In the same frontage (approximately 9 units) of the application site, the proposed use of the premises as a café is not present along this frontage. The adjacent unit at No.180 is currently used as a nails and beauty salon whilst the ground floor unit of No.182 is used as a café and its basement for massage and spa. As such, the proposed use of the premises as a café would not result in more than 2 consecutive food, drink or entertainment uses.

According to the submitted floor plans, there will be no change between the existing and proposed floor area. Whilst the applicable floor area will be more than 100sqm for the proposed use, it is noticed that part of the area at the rear will be used as a storage. On balance, it is considered the floor space of the proposed use is acceptable in this instance. Overall, the proposed change of use is considered acceptable and accords with Policies G1, TC2 and TC4 of the London Borough of Camden Local Plan 2017.

The application seeks permission for the proposed change of use from an escape room to a café without any external alterations. Predominantly the ground floor units along Drury Lane are occupied with a mix of retails, restaurants, cafes, beauty salons and barbers. The proposed use as a café is considered acceptable and preserves the character of this part of the Seven Dials (Covent Garden). Given the nature of the proposal, it is not considered to result in any undue visual harm on the host building and the wider area of Seven Dials (Covent Garden) Conservation Area.

Special attention has been paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the conservation area, under s.72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended by the Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013.

In terms of amenity impact, objections were received from nearby residents with regard to potential negative impact on amenity, mainly related to the noise disturbance resulting from proposed operation hours, deliveries and servicing, increase in alcohol-related anti-social behaviour and potential odour resulting from cooking.

Covent Garden Community Association (CGCA) objected to the proposal initially due to potential amenity impact resulting from the proposed hours of operation, hours of servicing and kitchen extraction. CGCA later withdrew their objection as the applicant has agreed with CGCA's suggested hours of operations and servicing via a planning statement. The agreed hours will be - hours of operation from 0800-2100 Monday to Friday; 0900-2100 Saturday; 1000-2100 Sunday; hours of deliveries and servicing from 0800-1800 Monday to Friday; 0900-1800 Saturday; with no deliveries or servicing on Sunday. These hours will be limited and secured via a planning condition. A condition will also be attached to the permission that prevents any music to be played on the premises audible at any time within any adjoining premises or on the adjoining highway.

- 2 From the submitted floor plans, no information has been provided on any fume extraction for the kitchen use. Given the nature of a café which mainly serves pre-prepared food, it is considered that the proposal would not result in undue impact from odour and a condition will be attached to prevent any primary cooking from the premises. Any external alterations including any new or replacement external plant or equipment in connection with any approved use of the premises would be subject to additional planning consent. Any consent, if granted under this application, would be related to the proposed change of use only at the application unit. The applicant also confirmed on the submitted planning statement that any kitchen extraction would be subject to further planning consents.

Given the nature of this change of use proposal, it would not cause any adverse impacts on the amenity of adjoining residential occupiers in terms of loss of light, outlook or privacy.

Given the limited floor space available within the site and the proposed use, it is considered that the formal requirement for short stay parking can be waived in this instance. There are a number of on-street cycle stands available to the north and south of the site on Drury Lane and these can be used by visitors to the site. There is also sufficient on-street parking provision nearby. The two closest underground stations, Holborn and Tottenham Court Road Stations, will be within reasonable walking distance. The new use is not considered to generate a significant increase in the number of trips to the site for a Travel Plan or Operation Management Plan to be required. Therefore, it is considered that the proposed use will be in line with Policy T1 of the London Borough of Camden Local Plan 2017.

The planning history of the site has been taken into account when coming to this decision.

As such, the proposed development is in general accordance with Policies A1, A4, D1, D2, T1, TC2 and TC4 of the London Borough of Camden Local Plan 2017, the London Plan 2021 and the National Planning Policy Framework 2023.

- 3 Your proposals may be subject to control under the Building Regulations and/or the London Buildings Acts that cover aspects including fire and emergency escape, access and facilities for people with disabilities and sound insulation between dwellings. You are advised to consult the Council's Building Control Service, Camden Town Hall, Judd St, Kings Cross, London NW1 2QS (tel: 020-7974 6941).
- 4 This approval does not authorise the use of the public highway. Any requirement to use the public highway, such as for hoardings, temporary road closures and suspension of parking bays, will be subject to approval of relevant licence from the Council's Streetworks Authorisations & Compliance Team, 5 Pancras Square c/o Town Hall, Judd Street London WC1H 9JE (Tel. No 020 7974 4444). Licences and authorisations need to be sought in advance of proposed works. Where development is subject to a Construction Management

Plan (through a requirement in a S106 agreement), no licence or authorisation will be granted until the Construction Management Plan is approved by the Council.

- 5 All works should be conducted in accordance with the Camden Minimum Requirements - a copy is available on the Council's website (search for 'Camden Minimum Requirements' at www.camden.gov.uk) or contact the Council's Noise and Licensing Enforcement Team, 5 Pancras Square c/o Town Hall, Judd Street London WC1H 9JE (Tel. No. 020 7974 4444)

Noise from demolition and construction works is subject to control under the Control of Pollution Act 1974. You must carry out any building works that can be heard at the boundary of the site only between 08.00 and 18.00 hours Monday to Friday and 08.00 to 13.00 on Saturday and not at all on Sundays and Public Holidays. You must secure the approval of the Council's Noise and Licensing Enforcement Team prior to undertaking such activities outside these hours.

- 6 This permission is granted without prejudice to the necessity of obtaining consent under the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007. Application forms may be obtained from the Council's website, www.camden.gov.uk/planning or the Camden Contact Centre on Tel: 020 7974 4444 or email env.devcon@camden.gov.uk).
- 7 You are reminded of the need to provide adequate space for internal and external storage for waste and recyclables. For further information contact Council's Environment Services (Waste) on 020 7974 6914/5 or see the website <http://www.camden.gov.uk/ccm/content/environment/waste-and-recycling/twocolumn/new-recycling-rubbish-and-reuse-guide.en>.
- 8 You are advised that condition 5 means that no customers shall be on the premises and no noise generating activities associated with the use, including preparation, clearing up, deliveries and servicing shall be carried out otherwise than within the permitted time.
- 9 You are reminded that this approval relates to the proposal as described above and as shown on the approved drawings, and does not grant planning permission or consent for any external alterations. In particular, attention is drawn to the need to apply for planning permission for any new or replacement external plant or equipment in connection with any approved use(s). Planning advice may be sought by contacting the Council's Development Management Team or by email at planning@camden.gov.uk.
- 10 You are reminded that a pavement license is required to place moveable furniture over a part of the highway adjacent to the premises. Further details could be found on <https://www.camden.gov.uk/pavement-licensing> or email licensing@camden.gov.uk.

In dealing with the application, the Council has sought to work with the applicant in a positive and proactive way in accordance with paragraph 38 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2023.

You can find advice about your rights of appeal at:

<https://www.gov.uk/appeal-planning-decision>.

If you submit an appeal against this decision you are now eligible to use the new [submission form](#) (Before you start - Appeal a planning decision - GOV.UK).

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'DPope', is written over a light grey rectangular background.

Daniel Pope
Chief Planning Officer