

JMF/lh/615WC2/43/1

13 February 2014

Development Management
London Borough of Camden
Camden Town Hall Extension
Argyle Street
London
WC1H 8EQ

FAO Fergus Freeney

Dear Sir

RE: APPLICATION FOR PLANNING PERMISSION, TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990, AT 76 SHELTON STREET, WC2B 5RH FOR THE INSTALLATION OF ADDITIONAL OFFICE (B1A) FLOOR SPACE AT ROOF LEVEL

This application has been submitted via the Planning Portal (ref: PP03157033) and comprises the following:

- (i) Planning application form, signed and dated;
- (ii) Relevant ownership certificates, signed and dated;
- (iii) Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) – Determining whether a Development may be CIL Liable – Planning Application Additional Information Requirement Form;
- (iv) Site location plan at scale 1:1250 ref: 615WC2/43/1-SLP02;
- (v) Ground floor plan as existing ref: 2459/01;
- (vi) First floor plan as existing ref: 2459/02;
- (vii) Roof plan as existing including photographs ref: 2459/03;
- (viii) Basement floor plan as existing ref: 2459/04;
- (ix) Elevations as existing including photographs ref: 2459/05;
- (x) Sections as existing ref: 2459/06;
- (xi) Roof plan as proposed ref: 2459/30 (the basement, ground, and first floor plans remain as existing);
- (xii) Elevations as proposed ref: 2459/31;
- (xiii) Sections as proposed ref: 2459/32, and
- (xiv) A cheque made payable to your authority for £1155 to cover the planning application fee which will be sent by post.

In addition to the enclosed, we would be grateful if you could take into account the contents of this letter in the determination of this application. Please note the **Design and Access Statement** is incorporated in to this letter below.



Site and Surroundings

The property comprises a 2/3 storey building constructed in, approximately, the 1950s with retail at ground floor and offices above. The unit was originally occupied by Sainsbury's supermarket and thereafter was occupied by Shepherd Foods Supermarket until about ten years ago when the space was, in part, let to Majestic Wine Warehouses (the part fronting Drury Lane) and the residue used as back-up/office space. This latter ground floor element has recently been subject to a planning application (ref: 2013/6695/P approved 23 December 2013) granting consent for the installation of a new shop front and the insertion of glazed doors along the southern elevation. It is anticipated that works will be undertaken to the ground floor shortly to reconfigure the existing Majestic store (and erect new Majestic signage approved under permission 2013/8101/A) and implement the new shop front permission, thereby putting the entire ground floor back to its original retail use.

The first floor is currently in office use and is occupied by the adjoining users (Garden Studios). Access to the first floor office and roof level is via a ground floor door located at 76 Shelton Street and via a stairwell with independent access to the first floor and roof level. A secondary internal staircase, at the Drury Lane end of the office, provides additional access from first to roof level.

The Proposal

This application seeks the provision of additional office floor space at roof level in two separate blocks comprising of 102.5 sq.m at the Shelton Street end of the unit of the building and 112 sq.m at the Drury Lane end. Due to the staircase and access arrangement, it would be possible for either of these office elements to be occupied independently from the first floor level or together enabling ultimate long term flexibility.

At the Drury Lane end of the roof there is currently a flat roof surrounded by a high parapet wall with a stairwell rising into it. The proposal retains the existing stairwell and creates new office space within the roof level, the majority of which is below the parapet walls and therefore not visible from elsewhere.

The new office at the Shelton Street end of the roof will comprise partly of a converted former plant room (which has been used for ancillary storage purposes since the supermarket at ground floor ceased operation and the need for air conditioning or chillers ended) with additional built form over an existing flat roof. It is proposed that the new element at this end will be created using a mansard roof extension with grey slate tiles and a regular pattern of windows reflecting that at the first floor level.

The area between the two new elements of office comprises stairs for the level change across the roof, lift motor room, a number of roof lights and a walkway.

Full details of the materials to be used and the visual appearance of both extensions can be seen on the enclosed plans, particularly looking at the elevations as existing and proposed.

Planning Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework, adopted in March 2012, confirms that planning applications must be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise, but also confirms the assumption in favour of sustainable development, which includes seeking positive improvements in the quality of the built, natural and historic environment, as well as people's quality of life.

The relevant Development Plan Policies are contained in the Camden Core Strategy and Camden Development Policies Document, both adopted in November 2010. It is relevant to note that the site falls within the Seven Dials Conservation Area, the Central Activity Zone (CAZ) and within a 'highly accessible area'.

Policy CS1 'distribution of growth' within the Core Strategy confirms that development should be concentrated in accessible locations and seeks to make the most efficient use of land and buildings across the borough. Core Strategy Policy CS3 confirms that highly accessible areas, in which the site is located, are suitable for a number of uses including offices.

Core Strategy Policy CS8 "promoting a successful and inclusive Camden economy" seeks to ensure a strong economy in the borough and notes that there is an increasing demand for office space within the area, to which this proposal can contribute. Furthermore, Policy CS9 "achieving a successful Central London" supports the growth of offices, which contribute to London's economic, social and cultural role.

Further guidance is contained within the Camden Development Policy Documents including within Policy DP13 relating to employment premises and confirms the importance of the retention of office space. Policy DP16, requires consideration to the transport implications of development requiring traffic generating uses to be in highly accessible locations, such as the proposal site. Policy DP24 seeks high quality design from new development reflecting and respecting its location and neighbours, and seeking quality materials. Finally, Policy DP25, relating to conservation areas require development to preserve and enhance such areas.

Planning Considerations

This proposal represents a unique opportunity to promote a small amount of additional office floor space on an existing highly accessible site in a sustainable manner, ensuring maximum use of an existing building, which accords with policy and also offers the opportunity to enhance the visual appearance of the site and wider area.

The principle of office use in this location is supported in both national and local policy, particularly in this location within Central London and the Central Activity Zone, which is considered to be highly accessible. The proposal results in no loss in floor space but will increase the total amount of office floor space provision on the site by 214.5 sq.m which, whilst being a small amount of floor space, will increase the efficiency of the site and contribute to the wider economy in a positive manner.

Design and Access Statement

Full consideration has been given to the design and access for this site, which is explained below using standard design and access headings.

Use – consideration has been given to the proposed use at roof level. Given the use at first floor level and properties in the wider area, office use is the obvious and most acceptable use in this location. As identified in the Core Strategy (Policy CS8), there is an increasing demand for office space within Camden and, in particular, within the Central Activity Zone and therefore the proposal will contribute to meeting this need in a sustainable and efficient manner.

Amount – careful consideration has been given to the amount of office floor space proposed as part of this proposal. Due to the existing constraints on the roof, namely the differing levels, the lift motor room, the stairwells and existing roof lights serving the first floor offices, the partial development of the roof level is the only option without major disruption to the lower levels. Development has been maximised within these constraints.

Layout – the layout was dictated by the existing constraints on the roof level as detailed above, but also with consideration to the end result arising from the additions at roof level. The development to either end of the building results in development that sits behind the parapet wall at the Drury Lane end and creates an additional floor level at the Shelton Street, which improves the appearance of the building when viewed from Shelton Street. The layout will ensure that the necessary plant at roof level is disguised from street level, whilst providing adequate and worthwhile additional office accommodation.

Scale – the scale of the proposal is considered entirely acceptable as it mirrors much of the development in the surrounding area, the majority of which is taller, at four storeys and beyond.

Landscaping – due to the nature of the proposal and its location, landscaping is not relevant, albeit consideration has been given to the visual appearance as detailed below.

Appearance – consideration has been given to the visual appearance of the proposed office development particularly from the Shelton Street end and within the context of the Conservation Area.

As noted above the site falls within the Seven Dials Conservation Area, and whilst the area generally includes many buildings and collections of buildings of great merit, the application building does not fall into that category, and there is potential for improvement, especially when viewed from Endell Street looking north east along Shelton Street.

The majority of the Drury Lane end proposed office development is hidden behind an existing high parapet wall and therefore the only element of new development visible from beyond the building is the top of the mansard roof and domed roof lights (albeit due to the angle at which these will be viewed from the street it is unlikely they will be visible at all). The north-western elevation of the extension on the Drury Lane end has been treated to match the proposals on the Shelton Street, albeit this will only be visible by people on the roof or within adjoining buildings at second/third storey level or above.



With regard to the Shelton Street office element, this will be visible above the existing roof line and therefore a mansard roof stepping back from the building line has been created with new dormer windows positioned immediately above the existing windows at first floor level (on the Shelton Street alleyway and mirrored on the frontage) to create symmetry but also creating a light and airy office environment. The Shelton Street short frontage looks along Shelton Street and therefore has no buildings directly opposite it (but is therefore very visible). The Shelton Street long frontage is on the opposite side of a walkway from an existing five and a half storey office building with windows flanking the walkway. Due to the design and the stepping back of the proposal from the building line, this will create an acceptable environment for both the occupiers of the new office and the existing occupiers in the opposite building and offers an improvement over the existing situation at ground and first floor level due to the staggering of the windows.

Access – consideration has been given to access to the site and, as per the existing first floor office, access is via a door from Shelton Street and via the internal stairwell.

Conclusions

The above demonstrates the suitability of the premises to create additional office development at roof level increasing the efficiency of this building. The proposal will make a contribution to the increased demand for office floor space in a sustainable highly accessible location whilst also visually improving the appearance of the building particularly from Shelton Street, thereby enhancing the conservation area. This development offers a unique opportunity and adheres with both National and Local Policy.

It is noted that the Mayor's Community Infrastructure Levy requires a payment of £50 per sq.m of new floor space. The relevant forms have been submitted with this application to enable the appropriate assessment to be undertaken and process put in place to enable payment should permission be forthcoming and the permission implemented.

If you have any queries regarding this application please contact Jackie Ford on (jmf@rapleys.co.uk) or 07770 328 674) and we look forward to receiving acknowledgement of this application in due course.

Yours faithfully

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cc: C Evans-Tipping Esq
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