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Eding House, Sandwich Street and Martens House, Thanet Street, London, WC1H 9QH

Planning Statement

Prepared for:

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1. Introduction

1.1 This planning statement is submitted to the London Borough of Camden on behalf of the Lutheran Council of Great Britain to support an application for the part change of use from student hostel (sui generis) to offices (Class B1) at Eding House and Martens House, Thanet Street.

1.2 The description of development is as follows:

“Change of use of part of the ground and first floor of Martens House and first and second floor of Eding House from student hostel (sui generis) to office (Class B1). Part infilling of existing garage to provide office floorspace.”

1.3 This statement considers the planning issues arising from the proposed development. It assesses the development in the context of relevant planning policy and guidance and with regard to relevant material considerations.

1.4 This planning statement should be read in conjunction with the following supporting documents;

1.5 This Planning Statement has been broken down into the following sections;

Section 2 provides a description of the site and surrounding area

Section 3 details the relevant planning history

Section 4 sets out the proposals in detail

Section 5 provides analysis of the main planning considerations

Section 6 draws our conclusions in respect of the overall proposals

2. Site and Surrounding Area

Site Location

- 2.1 The application site comprises Eding House, Thanet Street and Martens House, Sandwich Street. Both properties are seven storey (lower ground, ground and five upper storeys) buildings, located on a mostly residential street which comprises dwellings of varying styles. The surrounding residential development comprises a mansion block of flats, as well as five storey terraced houses and more modern apartments.
- 2.2 The properties are not listed nor are they in a conservation area. The properties bound the Bloomsbury Conservation Area.
- 2.3 The site is situated within a highly sustainable location with a Public Transport Accessibility Level (PTAL) rating of 6b (6b being the highest) and is well served by a variety of public transport links. Numerous and regular bus services run along Euston Road, and Kings Cross, St Pancras and Euston national rail and tube stations are all within less than a 5 minute walk from the site.

3. Planning History

3.1 Planning permission was granted in 1974 (LPA ref. 19357) for the redevelopment of the site for a seven storey building comprising a church hall, student hostel and youth club.

3.2 There is no other planning history of relevance to this application.

4. Development Proposals

- 4.1. It is proposed to change the use of underutilised parts of the building to provide office accommodation to be used by the Lutheran Council of Great Britain and partner organisations. There will be no overall loss of student accommodation as a result of the proposals.
- 4.2. This relates to the following parts of the property:
- The 1st floor ancillary office accommodation in Martens House;
 - Two study rooms on the first floor of Eding House;
 - One study room on the second floor of Eding House
- 4.3. In addition, it is proposed to infill part of the existing unused car port at Martens House.

Ground Floor

- 4.4 The existing administration offices are small and inefficient. It is proposed to extend this space over the existing car park. The south eastern wall of the proposed extension will be set back approximately 2m from the street and it will be constructed of brick matching the existing building. In any case, as a result of the extent of the set back the proposed extension will not be visible from the street scene.
- 4.5 The proposed extension would result in the loss of two car parking spaces, with two spaces remaining. The car park spaces are currently underused; one space is used by the church but the other three are used for bins and general storage space.

First Floor

- 4.6 The proposed change of use of part of the first floor of Eding House will result in the change of use of two study rooms. These are not used for student accommodation as these rooms are too small to accommodate the necessary furniture for such rooms and therefore have never been used as student bedrooms. The future users will have exclusive access to a WC and shared use of a kitchenette at first floor level.
- 4.7 It is also proposed to change the use of existing ancillary office accommodation on the first floor of Martens House to B1 office floorspace, and one extra study bedroom. This will allow for the accommodation to be used by partner organisations of the Lutheran Council of Great Britain, and separated from student residential accommodation. The ancillary office floorspace will be accommodated in the proposed ground floor extension.

Second Floor

- 4.8 It is proposed to change the use of one of the study rooms at second floor level at Eding House to B1 office use. This room is the only room not included within staff or student flats on this floor and as such it would be more appropriate if it were used as separate office accommodation rather than ancillary accommodation to be used by students, as student accommodation is primarily located on the floors below.
- 4.9 The proposals will result in the creation of 82.8 sqm of office floorspace.

5. Planning Considerations

Regulatory Framework

- 5.1. Section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, requires that the determination of any planning application shall be in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 5.2. In this case the relevant development plan comprises the London Plan 2011, the adopted Camden Core Strategy 2010 and the Camden Development Policies 2010. The relevant policies from these documents are set out and discussed in context later in this report.
- 5.3. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) forms a material consideration to the determination of planning applications. It places the presumption in favour of sustainable development (para. 14). It provides that planning authorities must approve proposals that accord with the development plan without delay. If the development plan is absent or out of date, then authorities are recommended to grant permission unless there are any adverse impacts of doing so that would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits.

Main Planning Issues

- 5.4. The proposals relate to the change of use from student accommodation to office use and the erection of an extension to existing ground floor office accommodation. Therefore the main issues for these proposals are considered to relate to the following matters:
- Loss of floorspace ancillary to existing student accommodation;
 - Provision of additional office floorspace;
 - Reduction in the number of car parking spaces.
 - Planning Obligations; and
 - Mayoral CIL
- 5.5. These matters are considered in more detail below.

Principle of Partial Change of Use to Offices

- 5.6. The site is located in the Central London Area in which Core Strategy policy CS8 supports the development of additional office floorspace. In addition, Policy CS9 states that the Central London area will be one of the focus areas for development and such development should

contribute to inter alia, London's economic role. Policy DP9 of Camden's Development Policies resists the loss of student accommodation.

- 5.7. The proposals will convert only ancillary floorspace within the building; there will be no net loss of student accommodation and space will remain to accommodate 78 students, as well two staff flats.
- 5.8. Three study rooms will be replaced with office accommodation. These study rooms have become surplus to requirements and are no longer used by students, who now work from their laptops in their rooms, which are furnished with desks. These spaces are now heavily underutilised but still have to be maintained by the Lutheran Council of Great Britain at some expense. It is therefore proposed to use the rooms as offices for use by partner organisations resulting in a more efficient use of space. The intended occupiers are other Church Councils which currently use accommodation in Tavistock Square, however, due to forthcoming rent increases are seeking alternative, more affordable accommodation which this change of use would provide.
- 5.9. The proposals will create flexible and affordable office accommodation, meeting the aims of Policy CS8 which states that Camden will expect to see a range of employment facilities and types.

Partial Infilling of Garage

- 5.10 The original planning permission approved four car parking spaces on site within a car port, which is accessed from Thanet Street. This car port remains but is not used for the original intended purpose- only one space is currently used occasionally for parking. The proposals will partially infill that part of the car port unused for parking. The site is in a highly accessible location as defined by Policy CS3 and there will remain sufficient car parking on site. Should the proposed development be found acceptable there will be no requirement to provide additional off street car parking and, notwithstanding this there is no policy which protects against the loss car parking and as such the proposal is considered acceptable in this respect.

Planning Obligations

- 5.30 The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Regulations 2010 provide that it is unlawful for a planning obligation to be taken into account when determining a planning application for a development, or any part of a development, that is capable of being charged CIL, whether there is a local CIL in operation or not, if the obligation does not meet all of the following tests:

(a) necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms

- (b) directly related to the development; and
- (c) fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.

5.31 We do not foresee any heads of terms being necessary given the nature and scale of the development proposed.

Mayoral CIL

5.32 In London, developments over 100m² or proposing more than one residential unit trigger the Mayor's Community Infrastructure Levy. A contribution of £50 per m² is payable in Camden. The proposal will result in less than 100m² of additional Office floorspace and as such there will be no CIL payment triggered.

6. Conclusions

- 6.1. The proposals result in the provision of additional office floorspace within the Central London area, in a flexible, affordable format which meet the aims of Council policies.
- 6.2. The proposals do not result in the loss of student accommodation, in compliance with planning policies, whilst resulting in a more efficient use of existing development in line with the NPPF.
- 6.3. Overall the development will result in an increase in good quality office accommodation in a suitable location within Central London and in compliance with adopted local policy and national planning policy guidance.