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BM/JS/LN1619

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30 August 2012

Head of Planning and Development Control
London Borough of Camden
Town Hall
Judd Street
London
WC1H 8ND

Dear Sir/Madam,

**19a SWAINS LANE, LONDON, N6 6QX
PROPOSED CHANGE OF USE OF THE GROUND FLOOR TO USE CLASS A2
PLANNING APPLICATION SUBMITTED ON BEHALF OF FITZROY'S**

On behalf of our client Fitzroy's, we enclose a full planning application for the change of use of the ground floor of 19a Swains Lane to Use Class A2. This application simply seeks a change of use and does not propose any change to the external appearance of the building. Any changes to the external appearance of the building such as signage would be the subject of a separate application.

Fitzroy's is an independent estate agency established in 1991, and currently operating from 5 Swains Lane. Fitzroy's aims are to provide an efficient and professional service, specialising in the sale and rental of residential properties ranging from studio flats to Ambassadorial mansions. Due to Fitzroy's prominence within the local area, they have vast local knowledge built up over 20 years of working in the very immediate local core areas, particularly the Highgate and Dartmouth Park areas. Fitzroy's is therefore very much an important company and asset to the local area.

5 Swains Lane is part of a parade which fully encompasses 1-11a Swains Lane and 109-110 Highgate West Hill. An application (ref: PEX0200580/P) was submitted a number of years ago for the redevelopment of the site to provide seven commercial units with twelve flats above. This application was subsequently withdrawn. It is understood that the freeholder is now further considering the potential redevelopment of this site to allow for twenty six flats and four retail units. This would not only require our client to move out of their current premises, but would also not provide any suitable premises for our client within the proposed development, should planning permission be granted.

Our client is a well established and well known company within the local area through its 15 years operating from 5 Swains Lane. It is also the only Use Class A2 operator along the full parade of 1-25 Swains Lane. It is vital to the future of the company that they maintain their status within the immediate locality, due to the business specifically dealing with properties in the very immediate locality. Due to the lack of availability of suitable premises within the immediate locality, 19a Swains Lane represents the only opportunity for Fitzroy's to relocate and maintain their well established professional profile within the local area. The change of use of the ground floor of 19a Swains Lane would not only allow Fitzroy's to maintain their prominence in the local area, but also provides future security for a local company which is particularly important in the current economic climate.



It is considered that an A2 use in this location is appropriate, and is entirely in accordance with policy. 19a Swains Lane has been vacant for approximately six months following its previous occupation as a Sandwich Bar and formerly a Video Rental Shop. The change of use of the ground floor of 19a Swains Lane to Use Class A2 would therefore bring this unit back into use whilst maintaining the presence of an important local company within the area.

Planning Policy

19a Swains Lane is designated within local planning policy as being located within a Neighbourhood Centre and within the Holly Lodge Estate Conservation Area.

The London Borough of Camden's Core Strategy (2010) recognises within its Vision Statement that neighbourhood centres will be *'...successful, safe and attractive, each with their own character and role'*. Core Strategy Policy CS7 (Promoting Camden's Centres and Shops) acknowledges a need to support Neighbourhood Centres, and further emphasises that *'Camden's 36 neighbourhood centres provide for the day-to-day needs of people living, working and staying nearby'*. It recognises that Neighbourhood Centres *'contain a range of uses including shops, food and drinks uses, doctor's and dentist's surgeries and financial and professional services, and often have housing on upper floors'*. Policy also acknowledges that in considering applications *'We will also take into account any history of vacancy in shop units and the prospect of achieving an alternative occupier for vacant premises'*.

The proposed change of use is also in accordance with Development Policy DP12 (Supporting strong centres and managing the impact of food, drink, entertainment and other town centre uses). *'The Council will ensure that the development of shopping, services, food, drink, entertainment and other town centre uses does not cause harm to the character, function, vitality and viability of a centre, the local area or the amenity of neighbours'*.

Camden's Supplementary Planning Guidance Note 5 (2011) further considers Neighbourhood Centres. *'Camden's Neighbourhood Centres provide for the day-to-day needs of people living, working or staying nearby. They generally consist of groupings of between five and fifty premises which focus on convenience shopping. Other uses that can make a positive contribution to the character, function, vitality and viability of these centres include financial and professional services; food and drink uses; launderettes; doctors; dentists; and veterinary surgeries. As a guide we will resist schemes that result in less than 50% of ground floor premises being in retail use; or more than 3 consecutive premises being in non-retail use'*. In light of this, we have reviewed the uses for Nos 1-25 Swains Lane, as set out within the Camden Retail Frontages Survey 2011. The survey records 71% of ground floor premises in A1 use. The proposed change of use of 19a Swains Lane would result in 64% of ground floor premises in A1 use. The proposed change of use of 19a Swains Lane to A2 use, would therefore be entirely in accordance with local planning policy.

The proposed change of use of the ground floor of 19a Swains Lane is also in accordance with the Holly Lodge Estate Conservation Area Statement (Draft 2001). The proposed change of use will further benefit the distinct established scale and design as recognised within the Conservation Area Statement. The proposed change of use is also in accordance with Development Policy DP25 (Conserving Camden's Heritage) and will preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the area through bringing a vacant unit back into use.

The London Plan supports a successful, competitive and diverse retail sector which promotes sustainable access to the goods that Londoners need. The National Planning Policy Framework



further sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development which should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan-making and decision-taking, and for decision-taking, this means 'Approving development proposals that accord with the Development Plan without delay'. The proposal the subject of this application accords with the Development Plan.

It is therefore considered that for the reasons set out above, planning permission should be granted.

The submitted planning application consists of the following information:

- Completed and dated application forms, including Ownership Certificate and a completed Agricultural Land Declaration;
- Site Location Plan at a scale of 1:1250 @A4;
- Ground Floor Plan ref: TT737 at a scale of 1:100 @A4; and
- A cheque for £335 made payable to 'London Borough of Camden' in respect of the planning application fee.

The planning application fee has been calculated from the Scale of Fees having regard to the description of development, which is the 'change of use of a building or land'.

Please note a design and access statement is not required to be submitted with this application. The proposed development is for a material change in the use of the building only, and does not propose any operational development. It is therefore exempt from the requirements.

I trust that this application can be registered on the basis of the above information, however if you require any further information or seek clarification, please do not hesitate to contact myself or my colleague Julian Sutton via the contact details provided at the top of this letter.

Yours faithfully
for Signet Planning

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Beth Mullan', located below the typed name.

BETH MULLAN
Senior Planner

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