

## **SUPPORTING STATEMENT FOR CHANGE OF USE FROM B1 TO C3 RESEIDENTIAL AT GROUND FLOOR OF 22 KINGSFORD STREET**

1. I understand that there is a development plan policy E2 to protect existing business use. However, there is a large surplus of B1 space in the borough. We are unable to rent the space that I am submitting for change of use.
2. These premises are not suitable for any alternative business use such as B1 –light industry, B2 general industry or B8 storage.
3. We have advertised the space on the internet and in local papers. We have a billboard attached to the outside wall on the building advertising the space. We have the property listed with several agents and also multiple listed all across London. We have consistently lowered the rental price, hoping to attract interest. We have tried everything and still cannot rent it. Please see attached appendix for letters from estate agents as evidence that the space has been on the market.
4. Ground floor office space (1800 square feet) tenancy is pivotal as the revenue from that space is essential to retain the building. We had a tenant in for 1 ½ years but this tenant was never really a normal tenant anyway. They were friends of ours and then a friend of that friend. They really just did us a favour as they felt sorry for us that we could not get anything rented at the time. They had no intention of staying even although I thought at the time that I could convince them. It was really just a stop gap for them waiting for their new premises.  
  
Initially when the tenant confirmed departure of the premises, I thought that I could apply for D1 use but as that was turned down last time, the only solution would appear to be Residential. This would fit into the council objectives at the moment for more housing that is desperately needed in the area.
5. Tenant cited space, premises and location are inappropriate for offices.
6. There are no nearby proper shops and cafes that are essential for office personnel.
7. There are no nearby tube or train stations for easy transport access.
8. The surrounding area is residential with residential feel and atmosphere.
9. That space was empty for the first 1 1/2 plus years of our occupancy of the building. Commercial agents Claridges, Christo & Co, Salter Rex and the online services of Free Office Finders had tried to rent the space with no success. We convinced our property lawyer to take the space as a favor which he eventually did for about 1 1/2 years. The space was inappropriate for the law firm and they left. The space was then empty with no tenancy for about another 1 1/4 years. We then found another tenant through a friend who recommended they take the space since the director lived locally. However, that company now says that the space is inappropriate for

commercial and he found something more suited to office space in a commercial locale.

10. Any tenants of the building, since the beginning, have only been people who live very local in the area. The building has never been viewed as a place for offices by regional or city companies. Tenants or prospective tenants are normally those who can actually walk to the building. This establishes a 'needle in a haystack' factor to the building, whereby the landlord needs to find that lone niche person who can walk to the office and lives in the local area as a business owner or manager and is willing to come into that locale for that specific office space. Ultimately the few commercial tenants that were attracted then come to the conclusion that the building is not right for office space and they eventually left the premises.

11. We had consistently lowered the rental pricing of the office space: first £22/sq ft, then £21, reduced to £20, further reduced to £19, then £18 and even offered it out at £16 sq ft at one point. We also deleted the common area maintenance charges and the service charges, and deleted parking fee. We even provided a certain period rent free too.

12. There is a lack of nearby facilities, transport and commercial atmosphere in the local area for it to constitute a right place for offices.

13. Within the local Kentish Town and Camden areas, office space is excessively available, frequently unoccupied, prices constantly being slashed; thus the competition for office space is too fierce since there are too many offices and not enough commercial applicants or prospects.

14. Conversely, the pressure on residential accommodations continues to grow, as there are more people that need good quality housing than is actually available in the area.

15. Safety & Security: That ground floor office space in the rear was broken into or attempted broken into 4 times in the past 3 months. It has been cited by independent security experts that the risk has increased as a result of the office being vacant in the night with no people around in the premises. At one point, the tenant employed a night guard to watch the premises through the evening from 10pm to 6am. All attempted break-ins and actual break-ins ceased. A residential apartment would be tended to throughout the evening and night to prevent any further break-ins or attempted break-ins, thus rendering greater security and safety.

16. The Council acknowledged that the building is not suitable for commercial offices. Commercial agents and prospective tenants have come to the same conclusion.

17. The precedent was set by approval from the Council for the conversion of the main set of offices on the first floor to residential.

18. The small office on left of first floor is still rented by my company.