

**PLANNING, ACCESS AND DESIGN STATEMENT  
INCLUDING  
HERITAGE ASSESSMENT**

**53 Endell Street  
London  
WC2H 9AJ**

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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 This planning statement has been prepared to accompany the full planning application for the change of use of the basement and ground floor at 53 Endell Street, from Class A1 (Shop) to Class A2 (financial and professional services).

## **2.0 THE SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA**

- 2.1 The site lies within Central London on the western side of Endell Street in the Borough of Camden. The site lies within the Covent Garden Conservation Area and consists of a mid-terrace, 4 storey property. The property is listed. The basement and ground floor premises have an A1 use and are currently vacant and have been for a number of months.

## **3.0 PLANNING POLICY**

- 3.1 Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) requires planning applications and appeals to be determined in accordance with the policies of the development plan unless material considerations dictate otherwise.
- 3.2 In this instance the most relevant policies are contained within the Camden Development Policies Development Plan Document.
- 3.3 Policy DP10 deals with small and independent shops. In considering small shops outside designated centres, Policy DP10 states that:

*"The Council will seek to protect shops outside centres by only granting planning permission for development that involves a net loss of shop floorspace outside designated centres provided that:*

*d) alternative provision is available within 5-10 minutes' walking distance;*

*e) there is clear evidence that the current use is not viable; and*



*f) within the Central London Area, the development positively contributes to local character, function, viability and amenity."*

3.4 Supporting paragraph 10.7 reiterates the text of Policy DP10 and recognises that *"as the number of people shopping locally has declined, it is unlikely that all shops outside centres will continue to find occupiers."*

3.5 Paragraph 10.8 then goes on to state, specifically relating to the loss of shops in Central London, that:

*"The Council will only grant permission for the loss of shops outside centres in Central London where it considers that the replacement use will also contribute positively to the local area. Appropriate alternative uses are considered to be housing and uses providing essential services for residents, businesses, workers and visitors such as professional and financial services, community facilities and launderettes."*

3.6 Paragraph 12.5 recognises that *"New shops, services, food, drink and entertainment uses can add to the vitality and vibrancy of Camden's centres and local areas"*

#### **4.0 PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

4.1 The site is occupied by a 4 storey building, within the Covent Garden Conservation Area. The ground floor and basement, the subject of this application, have an authorised A1 use.

4.2 The premises lies outside a designated centre but within the Central London Area. The application seeks the material change of use of the ground floor and basement from A1 to A2 use.

4.3 Policy DP10 states that such change of uses will be permitted subject to 3 criteria. First, Policy DP10 requires alternative provision (A1) is available within 5-10 minutes' walking distance. 53 Endell Street, lies within a cluster of local shops, many in A1 use. Furthermore, the designated central London



Frontage along Charring Cross Road and Holborn are within the 5-10 minutes' walking distance stipulated under Policy DP10. The local Endell Street shopping parade, combined with the nearby designated Central London Frontages at Charring Cross Road and Holborn, provide all the retail offer needed for local residents. Accordingly, the loss of the A1 unit at 53 Endell Street, to an alternative appropriate service use, would not cause detriment to the local retail environment. The proposal is therefore in compliance with Policy DP10, criterion d).

- 4.4 The premises is currently vacant and has been for a number of months. The previous A1 business was proving unviable. As set out above, the Camden Development Policies DPD recognises at paragraph 10.7 that the number of people shopping locally has declined and it is unlikely that A1 units outside centres will continue to find an occupier. This is the case with the premises at 53 Endell Street.
- 4.5 It is also important to recognise that the unit has been vacant for some time. Certainly, the applicant does not want nor accept that the unit at 53 Endell Street should remain vacant ad infinitum, on the basis that it is restricted to an A1 use. Indeed, if there is no flexibility within local policy to reflect the "real world" situation, then many shop units will remain vacant, unused and subject to neglect to the clear detriment of the local area, in this case the location within the Covent Garden Conservation Area is particularly important.
- 4.6 It should also be noted that granting a change of use to A2 will retain the existing shop front display in so doing and also, will always provide the fall back position of reverting back to the current A1 use, which falls under the remit of permitted development, as outlined in the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order which states A2 to A1 is a permitted change. This coincides with the overall aim of the Camden Core Strategy but will enable more flexibility in securing a tenant. Obviously this benefits the local community, both in terms of the viability and vitality of the area, and its visual aesthetics which are currently undermined by the disused shop frontage and the impression that empty shop properties provide, particularly in a historic conservation area, such as Covent Garden.



4.7 In terms of the site's location within the Central London Area Policy DP10 requires that the development positively contributes to local character, function, viability and amenity. As set out above, the change of use from A1 to A2 would provide flexibility in securing a tenant, which in turn would result in the vacant property being brought back into a viable and active use, which would clearly be to the benefit of the local area, not just in terms of viability and amenity but also the positive contribution that would be made to the local character.

4.8 The proposal is for a straight material change of use and will not involve any internal changes. The proposal would therefore not have any detrimental impact on the Conservation Area or the integrity of the listed building.

## **5.0 CONCLUSIONS**

5.1 The unit lies within a small parade of shops, outside a designated centre but within the Central London Area. The ground floor and basement are currently vacant and have been for a number of months. Unless this change of use is granted, the unit is likely to remain unoccupied to the detriment of the local area. This is of particular concern due to the sites location within the Covent Garden Conservation Area.

5.2 Granting the change of sue to A2 would result in the premises being brought back into active use, which would positively contribute to the character and viability of the local area. Furthermore, an abundance of alternative A1 retail provision is provided within 5-10 minutes' walk, along Charring Cross Road and Holborn.

5.3 The Council also needs to take into account the fallback position of the reversion to an A1 use without the need for planning permission. In addition, an A2 use as proposed will also secure the retention of the conventional shop window display.

5.4 Accordingly, with the clear facts and circumstances of the case, it is very much hoped that the proposed change of use from A1 to A2 of 53 Endell Street can be accepted and planning permission granted accordingly.