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**Date:** 24<sup>th</sup> May 2010

Chief Planning Officer,  
Camden Council,  
Town Hall,  
Argyle Street,  
London,  
WC1H 8EQ

Dear Sir/Madam,

**PLANNING APPLICATION TO ALLOW FOR USE OF PART OF FIRST FLOOR AT WAITROSE,  
191-217 FINCHLEY ROAD, LONDON FOR CLASS D1 USE IN ADDITION TO THE EXISTING  
CLASS A1 USE**

We act on behalf of our client, Waitrose Ltd, who currently trade from the above store at Finchley Road. As part of the company's expansion and in order to broaden and diversify the range of services they offer, Waitrose have recently developed a "Cookery School" concept, which it is envisaged will provide a complementary service (under the Waitrose / John Lewis brand) to operate alongside their foodstores. It is proposed to trial this new concept at the Finchley Road store.

Accordingly, we are instructed to submit a planning application to allow part of the first floor at the store (720 sq m) to be used for Class D1 (non-residential institutions) purposes in addition to the existing Class A1 (retail) use. This proposal will also require minor alterations to the elevations of the building and these amendments are included within the application proposal. The planning application comprises the following:-

- Completed Planning Application Forms;
- Completed Certificate B;
- Design and Access Statement (prepared by Bamber and Reddan Architects)
- The following plans:
  - Drawing No. 10-040-AZ-001 - Site Location Plan
  - Drawing No. 10-040-AZ-002A - Block Plan
  - Drawing No. 10-040-YA-101 - Existing First Floor Plan
  - Drawing No. 10-040-AG-101A - Proposed First Floor Plan
  - Drawing No. 10-040-YA-G01A - Existing Ground Floor Plan
  - Drawing No. 10-040-AG-G01A - Proposed Ground Floor Plan
  - Drawing No. 10-040-YE-001A - Existing and Proposed East Elevation
  - Drawing No. 10-040-YE-003A - Existing and Proposed South Elevation
  - Drawing No. 10-040-YE-002A - Existing and Proposed West Elevation

A cheque (made payable to the London Borough of Camden) for the requisite planning application fee of £505 has been forwarded separately in the post.

### **Site Description and Location**

The Waitrose store is situated on the western side of the A41 Finchley Road, in the heart of the Finchley Road / Swiss Cottage town centre shopping area. The site is bounded by roads on all four sides; Canfield Gardens to the north, Finchley Road to the east, Goldhurst Terrace to the south and Broadhurst Gardens to the west. In accordance with the store's town centre location, retail and commercial uses dominate the surrounding area. Residential properties lie to the rear (west) on the opposite side of Broadhurst Gardens.

The site is occupied by a seven storey building; of which Waitrose occupy the entire ground and first floors, with their main frontage on to Finchley Road. The five upper stories accommodate residential uses. The existing Waitrose sales area is accommodated on the ground floor of the store, whilst the first floor is used for ancillary activities associated with the Class A1 retail use of the store.

### **Planning History**

The Waitrose store was built pursuant to a planning permission granted on 21 August 1963 for the erection of an eight storey block to provide shopping accommodation on ground and first floors with flats over (ref: TP/60396/W).

Originally the ground and first floors of the building were previously shared with a Habitat store. However, following Habitat's closure, Waitrose amalgamated the two stores such that they now occupy the entire ground and first floors of the building as described above. Planning permission was granted for these works in 2007 (ref: 2007/0991/P).

### **Application Proposal**

The application proposals comprise the following:-

#### **Part change of use to allow for Class D1 use on part of the first floor in addition to Class A1 use**

The application seeks planning permission to allow for part of the first floor to be used for Class D1 use in addition to the existing Class A1 (retail) use. This is required to enable the provision of a complementary cookery school for use by the public at this site as shown on drawing no. 10-040-AG-101.

The area proposed to be used by the Cookery School extends to 720 sq m (gross). The school will be accessed from the southern side of the building via existing doors, with stairs up to the first floor and a lift from the lobby area to provide inclusive access for disabled people.

The facility will provide a state of the art Cookery School for the local community to enhance their cookery skills. The school will accommodate the following areas:-

- 12 fully equipped kitchen 'work stations' (including one 'work station' specifically adapted to ensure DDA compliance)
- Dedicated cookery demonstration areas
- Theatre area for lectures/training videos accommodating 34 seats
- Dedicated dining area for tasting food and Waitrose products
- Ancillary operational facilities including lobby and reception

On the basis that the Cookery School concept is to be trialled at this store, it is uncertain at this stage as to how successful the new facility will be. Accordingly, it is proposed to retain the existing Class A1 use to allow flexibility to revert back to this use in the event that this is required.

### External Alterations to the East, West and South Elevations of the Building

In order to allow the cookery school to operate from the first floor of the building, the following minor external alterations to the elevations of the building are proposed. These comprise the following:-

- The installation of three full louvres to the underside of the first floor windows on the eastern elevation, coloured brown to match the walls;
- Replacement of the westernmost existing first floor window on the southern elevation with a full louvre, coloured brown to match the walls;
- Addition of plaque adjacent to proposed school entrance doors (as shown on drawing no. 10-040-YE-003)
- Installation of two louvres and two flues to the west elevation. It is also proposed to replace two windows 'like for like' to this elevation.

### Relevant Planning Policy

The statutory Development Plan for the site is the adopted Camden UDP (2006). The proposals map designates the site as falling within the Swiss Cottage/ Finchley Road town centre. Relevant saved policies are as follows:

- **Policy R6** relates to other town centre uses, and states that the Council will only grant planning permission for development of other town centre uses (outside of Use Classes A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, B1a or D2) where it considers the development would not cause harm to the character, amenity, function, vitality and viability of the area. In considering such applications, the Council will consider factors such as the effect of the development on shopping provision and on nearby residential uses and amenity, fumes, noise and parking considerations.
- **Policy R8** states that above ground floor level in town centres, the Council will grant planning permission for the development of residential uses, shopping and service uses, office uses and community uses (within Use Class A1, A2, B1 and D1) where it considers the development would not harm the amenity of nearby residential uses, or prejudice the future residential use of other upper floors nearby. The area proposed for the Cookery School is located on the first floor of the building and is therefore supported in principle by this policy.
- **Policy C1** relates to new community uses, and states that the Council will grant planning permission for the development of community uses in suitable locations where they are easily reached by public transport. It specifically states that new educational uses will be granted permission provided that travel demand associated with the development would not harm the transport system.

The Council are also in the process of producing their Local Development Framework. Although not yet adopted, the Core Strategy and Development Policies DPDs are at an advanced stage and hence are a material consideration. Of relevance to this application, Core Strategy Policy CS7 states that the Council will protect and enhance Camden's town centres, whilst Policy DP12 states that 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. Policy DP15 relates to community uses and states that new community and leisure uses must be close or accessible to the community they serve, accessible by a range of transport modes, and located within the Borough's town centres if they are expected to attract a large number of visitors.

## **Planning Assessment**

### **Principle of the development**

This application seeks to allow part of the first floor of the Waitrose Store, Finchley Road from Class A1 to be used for Class D1 purposes in addition to the existing Class A1 use. The existing Waitrose sales area will not be affected by the proposals and there will be no net loss of ground floor retail use as a result of the proposals.

The use of upper floors of retail units for Class D1 use in town centres is supported in principle by Policy R8. The area proposed for the cookery school is currently used for storage and other purposes ancillary to the store's retail operation. The proposed cookery school will make efficient use of this part of the building by providing an educational facility in a highly accessible town centre location. The proposal can only assist in making a positive contribution to the vitality and viability of Swiss Cottage/Finchley Road town centre.

With regard to the proposed external alterations to the elevations, these are minor changes in order to facilitate the operation of the proposed Cookery School and have been designed to blend in with the existing building. The site is not situated within a Conservation Area and overall it is considered that these proposals will not have a material impact on the appearance of the building.

### **Amenity Considerations**

As set out in the preceding sections of this letter, the site is situated within a busy town centre and, accordingly, the property is surrounded by a mix of retail uses along Finchley Road, including numerous restaurants and take-away establishments where the preparation of food is ongoing.

The proposed cookery school will be located in a part of the building already used for storage and ancillary activities connected with the Waitrose store and the residential uses accommodated in the upper storeys above already exist within this context. However, Waitrose are keen to be a good neighbour and therefore the Company will ensure that the Cookery School is designed with attenuation measures for odour and acoustics. The details of these measures are still being finalised at this stage and therefore the applicant is willing to accept a condition requiring details to be submitted on any forthcoming planning permission.

It is proposed that the Cookery School will operate (with the exception of Sunday mornings) within the existing trading hours of the Waitrose store and, as such, will not result in any material additional disturbance to the residential units.

It is therefore considered that the application proposal accords with Policy R6.

### **Accessibility Considerations**

The proposed cookery school is to be located above the existing Waitrose supermarket within an established town centre. This is a highly sustainable location well-served by public transport, with a PTAL rating of 6B (which is the highest rating possible). There are numerous bus routes which run along Finchley Road, whilst Finchley Road London Underground station (served by the Metropolitan and Jubilee Lines) is situated immediately alongside the site. Swiss Cottage Station (on the Jubilee Line), and Finchley Road and Frognal and South Hampstead London Overground stations are also situated within walking distance of the site.

Accordingly, the site is located in a highly accessible location and constitutes a suitable location for a new community facility in accordance with Policy C1.

**Conclusions**

This application seeks planning permission to allow for part of the first floor to be used for Class D1 use in addition to the existing Class A1 (retail) use. This is required to enable the provision of a complementary cookery school for use by the public. The application also proposes some very minor associated elevational alterations.

For the reasons set out above, it is considered that the application proposals accord with all the relevant saved and draft local planning policies and do not raise any material planning considerations.

I trust that the enclosed information will enable a favourable determination of this application. In the meantime, I look forward to receiving confirmation that the application has been registered. Please do not hesitate to get in touch should you have any queries.

Yours faithfully,



MICHAEL MILLS  
Associate

Enc.