

Delegated Report		Analysis sheet		Expiry Date:		27/04/2010	
		N/A		Consultation Expiry Date:		26/03/2010	
Officer				Application Number(s)			
Jennifer Walsh				2010/0464/P			
Application Address				Drawing Numbers			
1 Catton Street London WC1R 4AB				Please refer to draft decision notice			
PO 3/4	Area Team Signature	C&UD	Authorised Officer Signature				
Proposal(s)							
Retention of change of use of building from office (Class B1) to language school (Class D1).							
Recommendation(s):		Grant Retrospective Planning Permission					
Application Type:		Full Planning Permission					
Conditions or Reasons for Refusal:		Refer to Draft Decision Notice					
Informatives:							
Consultations							
Adjoining Occupiers:	No. notified	12	No. of responses	00	No. of objections	00	
			No. electronic	00			
Summary of consultation responses:		A site notice was displayed from 05/03/2010 – 26/03/2010.					
CAAC/Local groups comments:		No response has been received					
Site Description							
The site is a tall five storey building located on the southern side of Catton Street. The English Studio Language School has been operating out of the property for the last 2 years. The building is not listed, but it is located within the Kingsway Conservation Area.							
Relevant History							
PS9804001: Change of use of 1st, 2nd and 3rd floors from use within Class B1 of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 to educational use for a temporary period, personal to the London Institute. Granted 13/02/1998							

Relevant policies

Replacement Unitary Development Plan 2006

SD6 – Amenity for Occupiers and Neighbours

E1 - Location of Business Uses

E2 - Retention of Existing Business Uses

C1 - New Community Uses

B7 – Conservation Areas

LDF Core Strategy and Development Policies

As the draft LDF Core Strategy and Development Policies documents have now been published, they are material planning considerations. However, as a matter of law, limited weight should be attached to them at this stage.

CS1 - Distribution of growth

CS5 - Managing the impact of growth and development

CS8 - Promoting a successful and inclusive Camden economy

CS10 - Supporting community facilities and services

CS14 - Promoting high quality places and conserving our heritage

DP13 - Employment sites and premises

DP15 - Community and leisure uses

DP25 - Conserving Camden's heritage

DP26 - Managing the impact of development on occupiers and neighbours

Assessment

Proposal

The proposal seeks retrospective planning permission from office use (Class B1) to educational use (Class D1). The applicants have been using the property for educational use since September 2008. There are no external alterations included within the proposal.

Land use

UDP policy E2 does in principle seeks to protect employment uses, but this is on the basis that they can be used flexibly for a range of employment uses. In relation to the application, it is not considered that the building could conceivably be used, in terms of employment uses, for anything other than B1 offices. The site is accessed through a narrow staircase, and the floor plate of the building itself is quite small, with an overall floor area of 480sqm. The site has few, if any, of the typical design features as outlined in paragraph 7.18 of the UDP that would allow flexible employment use and it is unlikely that incorporating such features would be feasible in a building such as this.

The applicants have not submitted any information to suggest that the proposals are vacant and/or the premises have become dated and are no longer attractive to modern office occupiers. Yet they have submitted information which is dated 30th September 2009, stating the continuing decline in the Central London office market. This suggests that its future office use was investigated, yet proved unviable.

Paragraph 7.22 of the UDP does make an exception for office premises in areas where there is a surplus of office accommodation to revert to other uses, in particular housing. It has been acknowledged that the Holborn area does have a surplus of office accommodation given the large number of recent developments for purpose built, modern office accommodation. The UDP goes on to state that in instances where the Council accept the loss of old office stock, the Council's preference is for the released floorspace to be used for residential and/or community uses. Educational establishments such as Language Colleges are considered to fall within the broad scope of a community use; and therefore it is considered to be a suitable use for a site.

The proposed use is education (Class D1); Policy C1c states that the Council will grant planning permission for the development of educational uses provided that the travel demand associated with the development would not harm the transport system. It also states that we should seek to secure the space to be available for community groups outside of term time or opening hours.

The site is located in a highly accessible location close to Holborn and Chancery Lane tube stations. It is considered that the existing public transport network would adequately cope with any additional numbers attracted to the new use. Therefore the proposal is acceptable in policy land use terms.

Amenity

Due to the proposals not including any external alterations, as well as the proposed use not raising any additional concerns, it is not considered that there will be an adverse effect on the occupiers or neighbours. Therefore the proposals are considered to comply with policy SD6.

Recommendation: Grant Retrospective Planning Permission

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