

JWP/TS/DP1935

20<sup>th</sup> November 2008



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**FAO- Sharon O'Connell**

**BY COURIER**

Dear Sir/Madam

**TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990  
1 UNIVERSITY STREET INCLUDING VICTORY HOUSE, 163-170 TOTTENHAM  
COURT ROAD**

On behalf of our client, Kensington Commercial Property Investments Ltd (a subsidiary company of the Derwent London group), please find enclosed a planning application for the above property. The application proposes the change of use of the fifth and sixth floors of the existing building from a serviced apartment use (sui-generis) to an office use (B1).

The planning application comprises the following information:

- A cheque for £335, the fee for the planning application;
- 3 copies of planning application forms including completed Certificate B;
- 3 copies of a site boundary plan (scale 1:1250); and
- 3 copies of existing floor plans.

**The Application Site**

The application site comprises the fifth and sixth floors of the above mentioned property which is currently in a serviced apartment use (sui generis). A certificate of lawfulness was granted on 21<sup>st</sup> December 2007 for the serviced apartment use. The remainder of the building is within an office use with retail at ground floor

The site is not located within a conservation area, and is located partly on Tottenham Court Road and partly on University Street. The surrounding area is characterised by a mix of commercial buildings comprising office and retail uses. In addition, the site benefits from excellent public transport accessibility.



## **The Proposals**

As set out in the Certificate of Lawfulness application, the use of the premises as serviced apartment continued uninterrupted up until the termination of the lease in November 2006. Since that time the premises have been vacant.

The proposals would introduce a B1 office use into an area characterised by commercial uses. Whilst the site is in a service apartment use, it would not lend itself for conversion into a hotel use. The site does not possess the characteristics required in order to accommodate a hotel such as the ability to accommodate traffic movements (coach/taxi drop off and pick up) and the servicing requirements associated with such a use.

There are no external alterations proposed as part of the change of use application, with only internal modifications to the existing building to facilitate the change of use.

## **Planning Policy Context**

In considering the acceptability of the proposals, we have considered planning policies contained in the London Plan (Consolidated with Alterations, since 2004), and within the adopted London Borough of Camden Unitary Development Plan (UDP), 2006. The site forms part of the Central Activities Zone identified in the London Plan, and is within the designed Central London Area as set out in the UDP.

The serviced apartment use falls within a hotel/B&B use for the purposes of the UDP, with Policy C5 dealing with such uses. Whilst policy looks to protect existing hotels and B&B in suitable locations, this is a function of the demands such uses place on the surrounding area in terms of vehicle movements by coach and taxi as well as activity in the evening and late at night. As there is a shortage of suitable sites within the Borough, policy looks to protect and retain these sites to reduce the pressure on the Council to allow development on unsuitable sites.

In its current use the site does not possess the characteristics which could potentially identify it as suitable for retention as set out in Policy C5. The form and location of the site could not provide the necessary space to accommodate either taxi or coach drop off and pick up facilities. The site is located on the corner of Tottenham Court Road and University Street with limited ability to allow a coach to stop outside without impacting on the traffic movements within the surrounding area.

Turning to the appropriateness of the site for a B1 office use, Policy E1 of the adopted UDP states that planning permission for office development in locations accessible by a choice of means of transport will be granted planning permission in accordance with the approach set out in Policy SD5 which looks to direct development which increases travel demand in Central London Areas.

London Plan Policy 5G.2 recognises that the CAZ is at the heart of London's world city offer, with Policy 5G.3 recognising the role the CAZ plays as a strategic office location. The site is located within the Central London Area as defined within the UDP and benefits from excellent public transport accessibility in the vicinity of Warren Street and Goodge Street underground stations, with extensive bus routes from Tottenham Court Road. It is therefore considered an appropriate location for office development.



## Conclusion

Whilst the serviced apartment use falls under Policy C5 of the UDP, with policy looking to protect hotel and B&B uses, this protection is a function of the demands such uses place on the surrounding area in terms of vehicle movements as well as activity in the evening, with a limited number of sites within the Borough capable of accommodating the specific requirements of a hotel. The application site does not possess the ability to accommodate these vehicle movements due to the characteristics of the site.

A change of use to B1 office meets the requirements of policy, with the site located within the CAZ, Central London Area and benefiting from excellent public transport accessibility.

For the reasons set out above we trust that the submitted proposals will be considered acceptable. For further information please contact Tom Sweetman at the above address.

Yours faithfully

**DP9**